UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

REVOLUTION OR REVELATION:
A GRAMSCIAN APPROACH TO THE RISE OF POLITICAL ISLAM IN PALESTINE

BY

THOMAS JOHN BUTKO ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and
Research in partial fulfillment of requirements for the
degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my parents, the late Louis and Dora Butko. I am eternally indebted to them for instilling within me a spirit of independence and for never telling me what I should or should not do.

ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of 'Political Islam' has increased in both scope and importance over the past two decades. Beginning with the revolution in Iran, its impact in the Middle East and the international theatre have made it potentially the most destabilizing development in the region. It is because of these circumstances that the phenomenon of political Islam, while eliciting a very strong response in a number of Western capitals, remains, for the most part, greatly misunderstood, as the West continues to assume a uniformly aggressive stance against all these movements, regardless of their professed aims.

This dissertation has sought to deconstruct some of the myths and biases that surround the expansion of political Islam. In examining this phenomenon through a Gramscian framework, the aim is to present primarily indigineous movements specific to a certain region through Western concepts and terminology, and in the process, make it more easily understandable to Western audiences. Thus, the alien nature and discourse of the Islamist movements should not confuse the fact that these movements, are most specially political movements, which originated in response to a universal phenomenon of modernization epitomized by relative material disadvantage and a closed political system.

This study first conceptualizes the phenomenon of political Islam in both its theoretical (political doctrine) and practical (bases of social support) forms. After presenting the specifics of the Gramscian theoretical framework, the theory is then applied to both Muhammad and the current case of Palestine (e.g., Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood) to demonstrate the underlying link within political Islam from the time of *jahiliyyah* to the present. In this sense, the conclusion reached is that a Gramscian framework provides a distinct interpretation of a complicated phenomenon and is a more appropriate method through which to examine political Islam.

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INTRODUCTION

A day does not seem to pass in which we do not hear some news emanating from the Middle East regarding the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism. Suicide bombings, random acts of violence, and other atrocities seem like daily occurrences in Muslim societies that are perceived as radically different from our own. But are these societies and cultures really all that different from ours? What is it that the Islamic fundamentalists desire? And is the term 'fundamentalist' really accurate in describing their movements and their aims? Is there something inherent in the religion of Islam that leads certain people to embark on a violent course of action towards their own socio-political environment, or should we be examining the specific elements of the society and political structures of these states?

In explaining the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism,[1] the primary factor accounting for its growth is the fact that those in power in the majority of Muslim countries have refused to permit political opposition to their rule. It can, therefore, be assumed that a monopolistic political elite would provoke a hardened opposition that desires to supplant it. In democratic societies, open and democratic processes which allow an outlet for the voicing of different interests help to defuse more confrontational tactics. However, when opposition cannot be expressed through legitimate and peaceful means, conflict and violence become the only alternatives for those who oppose the regime and its policies.

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[1] In this study, 'Political Islam' will subsequently be used instead of Islamic fundamentalism because research demonstrates that the phenomenon should be more accurately interpreted in terms of Islam's utilization as an instrument of political protest, as opposed to the fundamentalism first associated with the Christian movements in the United States at the turn of the century.

When one examines the process of democratic entitlement in the West, it is clear that democracy was not a 'gift' bestowed by the political elite, but rather was gradually devolved to the masses as increased economic power led to demands for greater political rights. Furthermore, it was in that country where democratic reforms were the most impeded and all forms of opposition the most harshly repressed - Russia - that opposition to the regime became the most violent. In the end, revolution appeared not only desirable, but also inevitable.

The intention here is not to demonize the Islamists and thus brand Muslim societies or Islam itself as somehow 'evil.' Instead, the aim is to demonstrate that the politicization of Islam is a specific reaction to the recent attempts of elites in contemporary Muslim societies to modernize economically, while continuing to exclude the populace from having a concrete role in the political affairs of the state. In fact, the process is very similar to the one experienced by most European states in the nineteenth century. It must be remembered that in Europe it was a process which took a significant period of time to develop, at the cost of much blood and many lives.

The central objective of this study is to conceptualize the recent growth of political Islam in the Muslim world through a Gramscian theoretical framework. Since the one common factor that unites contemporary Islamists is their rejection of the current existing social order and their subsequent desire for its overthrow, Gramsci helps to provide the context within which one can articulate a theory of active revolution through the creation of what he terms 'a counter-hegemonic bloc.' More particularly, a Gramscian framework will be applied to the case of Palestine to illustrate that Hamas is a revolutionary movement legitimized through the Islamists' utilization of Muhammad as the model of revolutionary construction. Conversely, it should be noted that this is not a case study of either Hamas[2] or Muhammad. They will simply be used to emphasize the central argument of this study which is that a Gramscian framework is both an effective and meaningful approach to explaining the phenomenon of political Islam.

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[2] As will be observed, the case of Palestine is especially provocative, because the Islamists - especially the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas - are not only fighting to eliminate Israeli rule, but concurrently, seeking to supplant the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) as the hegemonic power in the Occupied Territories (the West Bank and the Gaza Strip).

As both Gramsci and contemporary Islamists realize, the conceptualization and construction of an active revolutionary movement vis-a-vis the ruling political/economic elite requires both a theoretical and practical dimension. In fact, this is probably Gramsci's greatest contribution to the theory of active revolution.[3] Throughout this study attention will be focused on how these two components - the theoretical and the practical - interlink and complement each other. The centrality of this relationship between theory and practice is not only emphasized by Gramsci, but also by the primary ideologues within the twentieth century Islamic political tradition. All the core Islamic theorists conceive their ideologies as 'ideologies of movement.' In other words, they understand the importance of utilizing ideology to mobilize the masses towards a specific aim. Consequently, the Islamists help provide a framework of revolution, the ultimate objective of which is the seizure of power from the current entrenched elite.

Thus, this study hopes to demonstrate that the Islamists, like many late nineteenth century and early twentieth century European 'revolutionaries,' desire nothing more than

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3. This conceptualization of 'active revolution' was unquestionably shaped by the earlier works of theorists such as Marx and Hegel.

what is innate in human nature; not just freedom, but a sense of empowerment and an opportunity to share in the economic and political resources which they feel they have long been excluded. In the end, a Gramscian theoretical framework will be used to demonstrate that in spite of the acknowledged differences between these movements - European and Islamic - they share many similarities in terms of the ultimate objective of creating a revolutionary counter-hegemonic force.

The organization of this work is a deliberate attempt to most effectively emphasize the central tenets of any exploration of contemporary Islamic movements. The first two chapters will attempt to define succinctly the phenomenon of political Islam by focusing on its two dimensions - the theoretical (Chapter 1) and the practical (Chapter 2). Chapter 1 will establish political Islam as a distinct political ideology with a coherent and consistent set of doctrine and beliefs. Chapter 2 will examine the application of political Islam to the practical environment in contemporary Muslim societies. Thus, political Islam should be viewed primarily as an indigenous response to problems associated with attempts at economic development and the subsequent failure to create a more inclusive political structure. After having contextualized political Islam in both a theoretical and practical sense, Chapter 3 will then utilize a Gramscian framework through which to better understand the phenomenon of political Islam. Chapters 4 and 5 will then apply the Gramscian framework to both Muhammad (the first Muslim) and Hamas (a contemporary Islamic movement) to demonstrate that Gramsci can help to effectively explain political Islam both in its past development and its present form.

More specifically, Chapter 1 will examine the principal Islamic ideologues, or 'organic intellectuals,' who are perceived as having had the most significant impact on contemporary Islamic movements. The four key Islamic ideologues of the twentieth century are Hasan al-Banna (1906-1949), Abul ala Mawdudi (1903-1979), Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), and Ayatollah Khomeini (1903-1989).[4] Their lives will be examined, both through their own writings and secondary sources, to help contextualize the links between the theoretical and practical components of their works in promoting Islam through a political framework.

Chapter 1 will also examine the principal doctrinal similarities between these four Islamic writers. The aim will be to demonstrate how their collective writings have helped form the core of political Islamic doctrine, elevating it to an ideological level not unlike that of liberalism and communism. It can be argued that, similar to liberalism and communism, political Islam exhibits an internal consistency or specific core of beliefs, and that this ideology has been used to unite divergent members of society behind a common worldview and the greater aims of the Islamic movement.

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[4] It is readily admitted by the author that while the Prophet Muhammad himself clearly had the single greatest impact on the current ideological orientation of contemporary Islamic movements, his contributions will be examined more clearly in Chapter 4.

There are five core beliefs that these theorists share that form the nucleus of the Islamic doctrine. In each case, not unexpectedly, it is the Koran which provides the primary source of reference for their writings. The first is the shared belief in the ultimate sovereignty of God (*hakimiyyah*). In other words, God must be viewed as the omnipotent force in the universe, which includes God's complete sovereignty over man and the explicit political implications of such a relationship. The second is an espousal of a type of Islamic socialism expressed through such universal terms as justice, equality and freedom. In turn, this concept is practically equated with the overriding aim of ending man's oppression of his fellow man. The third core assumption involves the expressed belief in the universality and totality of Islam. Since Islam is 'God's religion,' all other belief systems that attempt to divide men or to carve the world into separate political units are denounced, especially Western concepts such as nationalism. Islamists contend that Islam possesses all the solutions needed to address the contemporary ills plaguing modern society. Fourth, they share a stringent anti-western stance, equating the West with all that is 'harmful.' This is especially true in terms of the West's perceived decadent standards regarding moral laxity, sexual promiscuity, the use of such evils as drugs and alcohol and the charging of interest. Finally, there is a common core of Islamic conceptions of leadership, organization, and long-term strategy. These views include a belief in the need to conduct '*Jihad*,' or a holy war, against both the West and their own 'non-Islamic' regimes.

Chapter 2 will examine the more practical dimensions of contemporary Islamist movements. In other words, while ideology has the power to move people, an individual must perceive it to be in his or her own self interest before one is willing to join and to commit themselves to these movements. Therefore, while ideology brings coherence to thoughts, it is the practical interests of the individual that lend action towards the movement's ultimate objectives. Consequently, it is more meaningful to examine Islamist movements not simply in moral and religious terms, but as social movements that aim to address the present inequalities confronting the masses.

More specifically, chapter 2 will seek to examine some of the principal factors behind the recent upsurge in the Islamists' social support. It will be argued that much of their support is a direct consequence of elite attempts in various Muslim countries to modernize their economies. As a result, it has been those individuals most detrimentally affected by these changes and most acutely experiencing feelings of alienation, marginalization, and frustration, who target the regime as the prime object of their animosity. In turn, they have tended to unite behind that force or movement they believe constitutes the best vehicle for expressing their grievances and the only legitimate opportunity of defeating the current regime. Therefore, the Islamists have achieved most of their success through their ability to unify the people in their common rejection of this 'corrupt, incompetent, and oppressive regime.'

Chapter 3 will then attempt to conceptualize the ideas and practices of the contemporary Islamic movement. It will be argued that Antonio Gramsci, the early twentieth century Italian Marxist,[5] provides the most appropriate framework through which to conceptualize contemporary political Islamic movements. Like his contemporary Islamist counterparts, Gramsci recognizes that many fundamental and universal beliefs are shared by individuals who believe that they have been deprived of their full freedom to participate in a more 'just' and 'equitable' distribution of economic, political, and social resources. As was the case in Mussolini's fascist Italy, the denial of even the most basic of freedoms led to other and often more violent means by through which to express opposition to the ruling regime. Consequently, in both political Islam's contemporary doctrinal form and its practical manifestation, the conceptualization of active revolution through a Gramscian theoretical framework can assist in a more precise interpretation of these Islamic movements, especially as illustrated by the case of Palestine. Gramsci's conceptualization of society and state, the role of ideology and the function of organic intellectuals as unifiers of belief and action, the crucial role performed by organization, leadership, and each individual member in terms of an almost organic unity within the contemporary revolutionary movement, and the long term strategies endorsed through education and preparation, all have their parallels in modern Islamic movements. While the Muslim culture is no doubt different from that of the West, in the end, the disadvantaged groups of all societies share a fundamental belief that the problems of society can only be solved on the foundations of a more moral, just and equal society.[6]

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[5] As will be examined in Chapter 3, the 'purity' of his Marxism has been much disputed.

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[6] As will become readily apparent, while these more 'moral,' 'just,' and 'equal' foundations are subjectively perceived, it is clear to the disadvantaged segments of the population that the discredited ruling regime can no longer fulfil their expectations. Hence, the

Chapter 4 will examine the life and activities of the founder of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad, emphasizing his importance in illustrating some of the central tenets of Gramsci's revolutionary theory. Even almost fourteen hundred years after his death, Muhammad's ideal character and high moral standards, in addition to his revolutionary abilities, remain the model for all contemporary Muslims to emulate. It will be examined how Muhammad, through both word (The Koran) and deed (the organization of his followers) was able to methodically create a small dedicated following and eventually transform it into a massive popular movement. Through a brief contextual understanding of Muhammad's epoch and the reigning beliefs of his time, it will be possible to view how this small dedicated following organized itself through an Islamic ideology and the long term strategy it conducted. Basically, this strategy involved a programme of education (preparation), separation (*hijrah* or migration), and finally confrontation (*jihad*). In the end, Muhammad was able to contrast the totality of his movement against the dominant beliefs of the time and, through unifying those elements opposed to the current ruling structure, eventually defeat his enemies. By examining the doctrine of the first Muslims and the factors

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Islamists offer the best and perhaps only hope of bringing such a state to fruition.

accounting for Islam's early success, some insight can be provided in helping to explain the current phenomenon of political Islam. In other words, by examining Muhammad's movement through a Gramscian theoretical framework it can be argued that Muhammad's success was rooted in his ability to create an effective counter-hegemonic force, or revolutionary bloc, that both differentiated itself from, and was able to confront, the hegemonic group and the dominant beliefs of his time.

Finally, Chapter 5 will use the case of Palestine to illustrate the theoretical and methodological interpretations proposed. It is clear that the situation in Palestine is, in a certain sense, a "worst-case scenario." Clearly, the Islamists in Palestine are confronting what could be deemed a 'double' hegemon through the combined force of both the PLO and Israel. Thus, the point to be developed is that if a Gramscian explanation works here, under exceptional or "least favourable" conditions, it should apply to more standard cases (e.g., Egypt, Algeria).

More specifically, in Chapter 5 the early history of the Muslim Brotherhood, the development of the Palestinian Islamists under 'Arab occupation,'[7] and the growth of Islam in

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[7] From 1948-1967 the Gaza Strip was an Egyptian protectorate while King Abdullah of Jordan annexed the West Bank in 1949.

Palestine since 1967 will all briefly be reviewed. However, the primary focus will be on the spectacular growth that political Islam has enjoyed since the outbreak of the intifada in 1987, most forcefully demonstrated by the rise and expansion of the Islamic group Hamas. Consequently, much of the investigation in chapter 5 will centre on the evolving rivalry between the Islamists and the PLO in this period. While it is true that Israel will remain Hamas' principal adversary as long as the occupation of Palestine continues, the Islamists still ultimately seek to supplant the PLO as the dominant or hegemonic force within Palestinian society. In terms of the PLO's status as the dominant or hegemonic power in the Occupied Territories, while it is conceded that it does not command all the instruments of state power possessed by other ruling elites in the Middle East, it clearly retains the leadership of the Palestinian people as its 'sole legitimate representative' based on their almost total domination and penetration of Palestinian civil society. Subsequently, by applying Gramscian terms and concepts an attempt will be made to better comprehend the revolutionary nature of these Islamic groups, especially Hamas, in their role as a counter-hegemonic force vis-a-vis the PLO. Furthermore a Gramscian framework will be utilized to garner a greater understanding of the reasons for the spectacular growth enjoyed by Hamas from 1988 to 1993[8] and its precipitous drop in support since the signing of the Oslo Accords.

Using a Gramscian framework, it will be argued that the Muslims that support the Islamic movements of the Middle East are neither criminals nor deviants. Instead, most individuals who support these groups are rational in their aims. Gramsci's theory of 'active revolution' demonstrates that while cultural and national factors are important - a fact Gramsci himself recognized - his theory should be seen, in the case of both Muhammad and the Islamists, as universally applicable. In other words, Gramsci's theory of active revolution transcends both temporal and cultural differences. For it is clear that many members of contemporary Muslim society only desire that which their European cousins fought for less than a century ago. They seek a greater degree of justice, equality, fairness, and human dignity. In a practical sense, this means greater control over their own lives and the opportunity to share in the political, economic, and social resources from which they have long been excluded. In their opinion, these changes will only occur if the current hegemon and its corrupt, incompetent, and oppressive ways are destroyed, and the system on which it is constructed overthrown. It is to these fundamental desires that political Islam seeks to appeal, and continues a process that will persist well into the next millennium.

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[8] While Hamas was only created in 1988 as a separate organization from the Muslim Brotherhood, by the summer of 1993, before the signing of the Oslo Accords, it was estimated that it had the support of approximately 40% of the Palestinian population. (See Chapter 5).

CHAPTER I: THE ISLAMIC IDEOLOGUES AND THE DOCTRINE OF POLITICAL ISLAM

In this chapter, two basic aims will be pursued. First, it is relevant to examine some of the personal and political experiences of the core theorists involved in this study. Short biographies of Hasan al-Banna (d.1949), Abul ala Mawdudi (d.1979), Sayyid Qutb (d.1966), and Ayatollah Khomeini (d.1989) are necessary to establish the contexts within which these theorists espoused their respective views. It is important to remember that all these theorists expounded doctrines of action. Therefore, their personal experiences and political actions are as important as the theories and ideologies they put forth.

In the second part of this chapter it will be argued that the four thinkers examined represent the nucleus of Islamic political thought in the twentieth century. It will be demonstrated that their collective works exhibit five principal beliefs that help to form the core of Islamic political doctrine (see Introduction). By constructing a truly Islamic ideology, they have elevated Islam to a doctrinal status on a par with the great ideologies of the West, liberalism and Marxism. The primary source of these core beliefs is of course the Koran.[1] In the end, perhaps most importantly, these theorists all share a similar position in terms of their ultimate objective. The aim, in its most practical sense, is the overthrow of the current social order and ruling elite through a strategy of *jihad*. Quite simply, they all support the goal of active revolution.[2]

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[1]. As'ad AbuKhalil, "The Incoherence of Islamic Fundamentalism: Arab Thought at the End of the 20th Century," *Middle East Journal* 48, no.4 (Autumn 1994): 677-694, p. 691.

HASAN AL-BANNA

Hasan al-Banna, as the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, was perhaps the most successful of all the twentieth century Islamists in his ability to intimately connect the role of theory and practice into the 'revolutionary' struggle. Born in 1906, his formative years were greatly influenced by the foreign occupation that surrounded him both in his home town of Mahmoudia and later when he taught school in Isma'ilayya, located in the Suez Canal zone controlled by the British. Richard Mitchell, in his study of the Muslim Brotherhood, recounts how "early in his life, Banna had expressed his dismay at the extent of foreign control over Isma'ilayya, and how shocked he was to see street signs, even in the popular quarters, written in 'the language of the economic occupation'."[3] Banna was also profoundly shocked by the morals and injustices of Egyptian society generally, and more specifically, by those of the British. According to Christina

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[2]. It should be pointed out that each of the four theorists examined here advocates differing views on the use of *jihad*, especially in terms of its usage against one's own people (see below). However, it should also be added that they share the view that violence is necessary in the overall 'revolutionary' struggle to supplant the current regime. Thus, violence assumes a higher purpose; it becomes not random and malicious, but instead moral and constructive.

[3]. Richard Mitchell, *The Society of Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 220.

Harris:

> He was daily offended by the sights of British uniforms on the streets and the presence of a host of non-Muslim foreign residents. The foreign community at this flourishing centre of the Suez Canal Company had better jobs, and they had a higher standard of living than the underprivileged Egyptians among whom al-Banna worked. This contrast became increasingly painful to him with each passing year. The presence of British soldiers was a constant reminder of the British Occupation and the irritant of foreign domination. Al-Banna's already kindled intellectual hostility to Western influences then became crystallized into emotional xenophobia.[4]

Banna also believed that these Western influences were having a detrimental effect on the Egyptian people in general, especially in terms of a decreased respect for religion, as the people were encouraged to blindly imitate the lifestyle of the 'infidel' Westerners.[5] These changes were most pronounced among the youth who al-Banna feared were being increasing 'corrupted' (i.e., secularized) by Western influences.[6] These early events of his life explain much of the anti-western and anti-modern tone that would define his discourse and that of many latter day Islamic 'fundamentalists.' As well, the Muslim Brotherhood's principal desire for social justice was also rooted in al-Banna's early life in the canal zone and the contrast he saw in "the conspicuously luxurious homes of the foreigners overlooking the 'miserable' homes of their workers."[7]

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[4]. Christina Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt* (The Hague/London/Paris: Hoover Institute on War, Revolution, and Peace, 1964), p. 148.

[5]. Michael Youssef, *Revolt Against Modernity: Muslim Zealots and the West* (Leiden, The Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1985), p. 68.

[6]. Edward Mortimer, *Faith and Power: The Politics of Islam* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1982), p. 252.

[7]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 7.

In founding the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, it is clear that the eventual success of the Brotherhood was based more on Hasan al-Banna's own charismatic ability as the undisputed leader of the movement than any other factor. As an individual endowed with great charisma and a prophetic zeal,[8] al-Banna possessed certain qualities of leadership that aroused the devotion of his followers and exacted an unswerving obedience from the rank and file of the movement.[9] Thus, in many ways, al-Banna was the Muslim Brotherhood throughout his tenure as leader.

It is important to keep in mind that while most contemporary Islamic fundamentalist movements are perceived as interested simply in the short-term capture of power, al-Banna was first and foremost a social reformer concerned with re-educating his members and reinstating Islam as the bedrock of Muslim society.[10] In fact, some scholars have gone to great lengths to argue that the re-educating of society based on non-violent and non-coercive means has always been a primary component of the Brotherhood's strategy. Tareq and Jacqueline Ismael argue that

> the idea of violence to reach power was not an intention of the organizers. Rather, the intent was to work peacefully through the publication of newspapers, formation of associations, propagation, and guidance.[11]

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[8] Sami Zubaida, *Islam, the People, and the State: Essays on Political Ideas and Movements in the Middle East* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1993), p. 47.

[9] Mortimer, *Faith and Power*, p. 254. Also see Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution*, p. 157.

[10] Nazih N. Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London; New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 132.

[11] Tareq Y. Ismael and Jacqueline S. Ismael, *Government and Politics in*

In fact, according to Christina Harris: "From the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood until 1936, the movement was characterized almost exclusively by religious missionary activity and social welfare work."[12] In other words, the Brotherhood embarked on a deliberate and gradual long-term strategy to re-educate the masses and reform the hearts and minds of the Muslims away from the corrupting influences of the West.[13] It was clear that in its early years the Brotherhood was essentially a "religious revitalization movement,"[14] with little interest in political matters.

While the Brotherhood achieved moderate support as a decidedly religious organization in its early years, it was the Palestine problem and perceived British injustices towards the Arabs that led to the politicization of the Muslim Brotherhood and its rapid growth in the mid 1930s. According to Edward Mortimer:

> Concentrating at first on moral and social reform, the Brotherhood became increasingly a political organization through its hostility to British occupation and also its support for the Palestinian Arabs against Zionism. The Brothers regarded Palestine as 'the heart of the Arab world,' the knot of the Muslim peoples and Jerusalem as the third of the holy places.[15]

Consequently, the Brotherhood's involvement in the Palestinian issue not only heightened the 'political' orientation of the

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Islam (London: Pinter, 1985), p. 60.

[12] Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt*, p. 177.

[13] Zubaida, *Islam, the People, and the State*, p. 48.

[14] Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt*, p. 150.

[15] Mortimer, *Faith and Power*, p. 253.

movement, but it also had a direct correlation on increasing the Brethren's membership. The Palestinian question helped to stimulate the growth of the Muslim Brotherhood as the total number of Ikhwan branches grew from roughly 15 in 1932 to 300 in 1938 to 500 in 1940.[16] In addition, the Brotherhood made inroads into all facets of society, as its membership "included a considerable number of students from al-Azhar; civil servants and other white-collar workers; urban labourers; some officers and many soldiers of the Egyptian army; and large numbers of the peasantry..."[17]

The outbreak of the Second World War and Britain's back-door diplomacy in guaranteeing a friendly government in Cairo prevented the Muslim Brotherhood from playing a more active role in Egyptian politics. However, by January 1941, at the sixth general conference of the Muslim Brothers, the Brotherhood had decided to begin running candidates in national elections.[18] As the war in Europe wound down the Muslim Brotherhood continued to pursue a reform-led policy, and for the first time was allowed to participate in elections in January 1945. However, despite al-Banna and the Brotherhood's willingness to partake in elections their attempts at fair participation were subsequently obstructed from above.[19]

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[16]. Ismael and Ismael, *Government and Politics in Islam*, p. 69.

[17]. Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt*, p. 158. Also see R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985), p. 81.

[18]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, pp. 26-27.

In spite of this setback, the years 1945-48 were ones of considerable expansion for the Muslim Brotherhood. According to Ismael and Ismael: "Their anti-British activities and their clear commitment to the Palestinian cause, as well as their social ideology, were well received by the Egyptian masses."[20] However, by December 1948, after the debacle of the first Arab-Israeli War led to an increased discrediting of the Egyptian regime,[21] and with fears that the Brotherhood was preparing for imminent revolution,[22] the Egyptian state set out to crush the Brotherhood who had literally established its own state within a state, by creating its own "armies, hospitals, schools, factories, and companies."[23] In other words, the Muslim Brotherhood had been able to infiltrate every level of civil society to such an extent that it now possessed a powerful enough counter-hegemonic force to challenge the very power of the state.[24] As a result, the government began an all out campaign to crush the Muslim Brotherhood in December 1948, culminating in the assassination of Hasan al-Banna on February 12 1949 in response to the assassination of the Egyptian prime minister by a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. Even though Banna had attempted to distance himself from the more radical members of the Brotherhood by denouncing violence - especially against one's own people - his death appeared to deny the Brotherhood of perhaps its greatest asset: a charismatic figure who could garner the respect, admiration, and loyalty of his followers.

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[19]. According to Richard Mitchell: "The January 1945 elections were believed to have been among the most obviously dishonest held in Egypt. Banna and all the other Brothers were defeated in constituencies [many] where they had been certain of victory." Ibid., p. 33.

[20]. Ismael and Ismael, *Government and Politics in Islam*, p. 72.

[21]. Ahmed Gomaa, "Islamic Fundamentalism in Egypt during the 1930s and 1970s: Comparative Notes," in *Islam, Nationalism, and Radicalism in Egypt and The Sudan*, eds. Gabriel R. Warburg and U.M. Kupferschmidt (New York: Praeger, 1983), p. 146. According to Harris, the Palestinian War of 1948 had also given many of the members of the Brotherhood practical fighting experience and as she states "enough arms and ammunition to become a grave security threat." Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt*, p. 184.

[22]. See Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, pp. 58-59.

[23]. Ibid., p. 66. Also see Youssef, *Revolt Against Modernity*, p.72.

[24]. As Gramsci demonstrates (see Chapter 3) it is the ability of a

ABUL ALA MAWDUDI

Abul ala Mawdudi (d.1979) was born in India in 1903. As will be examined later, he shared many characteristics with the other Islamic 'fundamentalist' writers of his time, especially Hasan al-Banna. In terms of his strong belief in the need for political activism, it is clear that "both [al-Banna and Mawdudi] sought to put such theory into practice through political and social action, and established political movements for that very purpose."[25] While their aims were similar it is interesting to note the very different sparks responsible for their early activism. For al-Banna, it was the British and Western encroachment into Muslim lands, while

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counter-hegemonic force to establish support throughout civil society that allows it to form a 'total' oppositional force able to seize state power.

[25]. Eran Lerman, "Mawdudi's Concept of Islam," *Middle Eastern Studies* 17, no.4 (October 1981): 492-509, p. 492.

Mawdudi feared the Muslims being swept away by the Hindu majority on the Indian subcontinent, a concern that would subsequently lead to the creation of the state of Pakistan.

Mawdudi's early political life in India reflected both his interest in political thought and his willingness to put such theories and beliefs into action. In 1918, he began his career as a journalist and by 1927 he had already written two books on Islam.[26] He also took practical steps towards promulgating the Islamic message in the early 1920s as a member of the Khilafat movement, which as a pan-Islamic movement, sought the return of the Ottoman caliphate.[27]

It was also during this period that Mawdudi, like al-Banna, exhibited a strong disenchantment with Western influences in the Islamic world. He especially held a strong dislike for many of the Indian writers whom he perceived as having collaborated too closely with the colonial powers, especially the British. Included in this list were even respected Islamic thinkers like the reformer Sayyid Khan. Mawdudi attacked these 'reformers' for what he believed were their misguided attempts to reconcile Islam with Western values and beliefs.[28]

Another crucial element of Mawdudi's early thinking was what can be termed his 'elitist' approach to the construction of a legitimate Islamic movement. To him, the social order must be seen as flowing from the top down.[29] Thus, according to Youssef Choueiri:

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[26]. Kalim Bahadur, *The Jama'at-I-Islami of Pakistan: Political Thought and Political Action* (New Delhi: Chetana, 1977), p. 11.

[27]. Freeland Abbott, *Islam and Pakistan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), p. 171.

[28]. Lerman, "Mawdudi's Concept of Islam," p. 494.

> To Mawdudi the question of leadership takes priority over all other political issues, for the leaders of society decide its general development and value system ... a pious and God-fearing political elite is bound to impart its virtues to various sectors of the population.[30]

Consequently, it is the leaders and the educated that determine the direction the masses will assume. In his own words, Mawdudi states, in much the same "hegemonic" language of Gramsci, that

> it is clear that mankind can hardly resist moving along the road shown by those who lead, if only by virtue of the fact that leaders control all the resources, hold the reins of power and possess the means of shaping and moulding minds and behaviour. They have the power to influence individuals as well as social systems and moral values.[31]

Mawdudi's elitist views, and his clear distaste for those Indian politicians that cooperated with the British, no doubt alienated Mawdudi from mainstream Indian writers. However, it was his constant arguments against the need for a separate Muslim state on the Indian subcontinent that finally led Mawdudi to establish his own Islamic party, the Jama'at-I-Islami, in August 1941. While it would first appear that

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[29]. Charles J. Adams, "Mawdudi and the Islamic State," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 102.

[30]. Youssef M. Choueiri, "Theoretical Paradigms of Islamic Movements," *Political Studies* 41, no.1 (March 1993): 108-116, p. 113.

[31]. Abul A'la Mawdudi, *The Islamic Movement: Dynamics of Values, Power, and Change*, ed. Khurram Murad (London: The Islamic Foundation, 1984), p. 77. Furthermore, in terms of Mawdudi's conception of human nature, Murad states that according to Mawdudi: "Man is not, by nature, corrupt, depraved, or sinful... In fact, he is equally capable of being good or bad, moral or immoral." p. 45. When these views are coupled with Mawdudi's emphasis on the determining role performed by the elites in shaping the attitudes, beliefs, and morals of the masses, Mawdudi and Gramsci demonstrate an almost identical conception regarding the 'relativist' character of human nature. (See Gramsci, Chapter 3).

Mawdudi should in fact be in favour of creating a separately Muslim state, his views on the evils of nationalism and the inherent universal nature of Islam prohibited him from entertaining such beliefs. Consequently, since the 'fundamentalists' share a common belief in the universalism of Islam it is only logical that Mawdudi would argue against the partitioning of the Indian subcontinent into separate nation states.[32] According to Mawdudi:

> Muslims had an identity or nationality of their own which was Islam; they were not bound together by ties of race, geography, language, mutual interests, economics, or even culture, but by their commitment to follow the will of God in their lives.[33]

It was obvious to Mawdudi that all these other 'artificial' constructions of nationality were simply tools of the West designed to keep the Muslim peoples divided and weak.[34] It was therefore paradoxical that, when Pakistan was created in August 1947 as a separate Muslim state partitioned out of what was colonial India, the most powerful Islamic party in Pakistan denounced its creation as an artificial construction conceived in the West.

However, after Pakistan was created Mawdudi and the Jama'at-I-Islami were forced to adopt a new strategy. To

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[32]. According to Anwar Hussain Syed: "The Maulana opposed the campaign for Pakistan because he believed that it would not become an Islamic state ... Mawdudi alleged that most of the Muslim leaders in India were unfaithful to Islam and did not want God's government." Anwar Hussain Syed, *Pakistan: Islam, Politics, and National Solidarity* (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 34. Also see Abbott, *Islam and Pakistan*, p. 181.

[33]. Adams, "Mawdudi and the Islamic State," p. 103.

[34]. John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* 2nd Ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 121.

Mawdudi, it was now important to assure that the newly created entity would become a truly Islamic state. It was to this end that the Jama'at would make the establishment of an Islamic state under the sovereignty of God the central plank in its political programme.[35]

From the "Objectives Resolution" declared in March 1949 to the dissolution of the Pakistani parliament in October 1954, Mawdudi and the Jama'at continued in their relentless attempt to install an Islamic constitution in the young state. That Mawdudi's influence was being felt on the secular Pakistani establishment is clearly demonstrated by the fact that throughout this period Mawdudi was incarcerated on various occasions, and in one instance, on May 11 1953, was even sentenced to death by a military court for his part in the anti-Ahmadi riots of July 1952.[36] Yet, with the dissolution of parliament in October 1954, and the coup by Ayub Khan in October 1958, Mawdudi's attempts at establishing an Islamic state, or even an Islamic constitution, would prove an illusion.

Mawdudi failed in all his subsequent efforts to make the

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[35]. Bahadur, *The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan*, p. 199.

[36]. The Ahmadiyya were an Islamic sect which Mawdudi went so far as to declare non-Islamic and thus heretics. According to Syed: "… at the height of rioting in Lahore, Maulana Mawdudi would not agree to issue a public appeal for an end to the agitation and violence. He interpreted the situation as a civil war between the public and the government, and hoped to see the entire administrative system crumble and the government surrender." Syed, *Pakistan: Islam, Politics and National Security*, p.79. For a further explanation of the crisis see Leonard Binder, *Religion and Politics in Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), Chapter 9 "The Ahmadiyya Controversy". As for Mawdudi, he was eventually released from prison on April 28, 1955.

Jama'at a significant force in Pakistani politics. Mawdudi would fight through the banning of his Jama'at Party in January 1964, the debacle of supporting Miss Jinnah in the 1965 elections,[37] and eventually the rejection of his own party by the Pakistani people in the 1970 elections in which the Jama'at received less than 5% of the total vote.[38] By 1972, the stress had finally taken its toll on Mawdudi and he was forced to retire as Amir of the Jama'at-I-Islami because of ill health, his dreams of an Islamic state still unfulfilled.

Since its formation, the Jama'at-I-Islami Party has never received more than limited success in Pakistan. And though *jihad* was at the forefront of Mawdudi's strategy, he consciously chose not to directly confront the power of the state. Instead, like al-Banna, Mawdudi sought to work within the institutions of the state to bring about the desired Islamization of society through gradual social reform.[39] Consequently, by the 1970s, after Mawdudi's retirement as Amir, the Jama'at-I-Islami not only decided against directly challenging the power of the state, but sought closer collaboration with General Zia Ul Haq after his overthrow of President Bhutto. In fact, it became a faithful ally of Zia in 1978 when the General began his declared policy of the Islamization of Pakistan.[40] In a summation of Mawdudi's political career, and that of the Party he founded, Esposito states:

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[37] Miss Jinnah was the sister of Pakistan's founder, and Mawdudi was ridiculed for supporting her when he had earlier stated that a women could not hold the position of head of an Islamic state. See Abbott, *Islam and Pakistan*, p. 228.

[38] See Bahadur, *The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan*, p. 126.

[39] See Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan, 1857-1964* (London; Bombay; Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 217. Also see Bahadur, *The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan*, p. 54. Both agree that the decision by the Jama'at to work for gradual reform was made in early 1948 after the failure to prevent the creation of the state of Pakistan in August 1947.

> Although Mawdudi and Jamaat leaders confronted the government from time to time and were imprisoned for their activities, on the whole they were prominent in parliamentary politics. The Jamaat has never been able to score impressive victories in electoral politics, but has nonetheless had a significant impact especially during the rule of General Zia ul-Haq (1977-88).[41]

In a last twist of fate, when Mawdudi himself became ill he decided to travel to the United States to seek treatment. Thus, it was the comfort of the evil and denigrated West to which Mawdudi sought escape in the last days of his life. Mawdudi died in 1979 and like the Muslim Brotherhood after the loss of so charismatic and forceful a leader as al-Banna, the Jama'at-I-Islami has never recovered from the loss of its beloved '*Amir*.'

SAYYID QUTB

It is Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), perhaps more than any other 'fundamentalist' writer in the twentieth century, was helped to radicalize Islamic political doctrine and lead it away from its earlier, more moderate roots established by al-Banna. While Qutb does provide a continuum with the earlier theorists in their conceptions of Islam as a political ideology, he also represents a significant break from al-Banna and Mawdudi in both action and word. According to Choueiri:

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[40]. In fact, four Jama'at members were assigned ministerial positions in Zia's early government (1977-1979). See S.V.R. Nasr "Islamic Opposition in the Political Process: Lessons from Pakistan," in *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform*, ed. John L. Esposito (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1997), p. 146.

[41]. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 130.

> It was in Egypt, after the demise of the Muslim Brotherhood and the implementation of Nasser's revolutionary programme, that Islamic radicalism was formulated as a comprehensive and exclusive doctrine. The Muslim Brother Sayyid Qutb has been rightly credited with the authoritative articulation of this particular ideology, in spite of his obvious reliance on al Mawdudi in building up a consistent and coherent world view.[42]

Qutb's ideological conceptions of political Islam represented the ideal for many later radical fundamentalist groups both in Egypt (e.g., *Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Islami, Al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah, and Al Jihad*) and throughout the Middle East.

Sayyid Qutb's early life in many ways paralleled that of the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hasan al-Banna. Like al-Banna, Qutb experienced a major lifestyle transformation when he moved to Cairo to live with his uncle in 1921. In both cases, the atmosphere of the city was much different from the small towns in which they were raised, and socially Qutb suffered a great deal of alienation in his new surroundings.[43] Thus, not only does this experience in many ways parallel those of al-Banna, but as we will observe in Chapter 2, many of the people that continue to support the Muslim Brotherhood most enthusiastically and the more radical Islamic groups share this experience of disillusionment and alienation created by moving from the comfort and familiarity of the countryside to the strange and crowded confines of the city.

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[42]. Youssef M. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990), p. 70.

[43]. Hasan al-Banna lived in Cairo from 1923-1927, after moving from his hometown of Mahmoudia. According to Christina Harris, it was in Cairo that al-Banna first "came squarely face-to-face with the intellectual and the social problems engendered by westernization." Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt*, p. 146. In terms of the effects of such a change on Qutb see M. Abu-Rabi Ibrahim, "Discourse, Power, and Ideology in Modern Islamic Revivalist Thought: Sayyid Qutb: A Review Article," *The Muslim World* 81, no.3 (July-October 1991): 283-298, p. 290.

From the 1920s-1940s, Qutb embarked on several distinct careers including that of a schoolteacher (like al-Banna), a civil servant, a creative writer, and a poet. In fact, during this period Qutb wrote extensively on a number of subjects. Surprisingly, Qutb's writings were mostly of a nonreligious nature, and included two autobiographies, literary criticism, and even a love story.[44]

However, certain writers agree that it was in the mid to late 1940s that Sayyid Qutb first became acutely aware of the endemic problems confronting Egypt. According to Ibrahim:

> Two things are clear about Qutb between 1947 and 1952; first, he was totally disillusioned by the social and economic situation in Egypt and ... second, his work "The Battle Between Islam and Capitalism" (1951) reflects his mature and realistic social understanding of conditions in Egypt.[45]

Thus, while Qutb's earlier literary work did not concern itself with the general social, economic, and political problems confronting Egypt, by the 1940s, Islamic themes and the call for the installation of an Islamic government began to assume a central position in his writings.[46]

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[44] Ahmad S. Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1992), pp. 21-22.

[45] Ibrahim, "Discourse, Power, and Ideology in Modern Islamic Revivalist Thought," p. 290.

While Qutb's disillusionment with the state of Egyptian society was already gaining a prominent position in his works by the late 1940s, it was the time that he spent studying in the United States throughout 1948-1950 that crystallized his views regarding what he perceived as the decadent and immoral nature of Western society. According to Moussalli:

> From his book *America I Saw* one can discern three features, among others, that shocked Qutb and propelled his mind towards further rejection of the West as the model to be emulated. The three features were materialism, racism, and sexual permissiveness.[47]

This experience would prove to be the turning point of his life,[48] and the formative event that would convert him to a more radical form of Islam.[49] It helped hardened Qutb's already anti-western and anti-modern position, culminating in the belief that only the instituting of an Islamic government could save Egypt from the excesses of the West.

Almost immediately upon returning from the United States Qutb joined the Muslim Brotherhood. In fact, as Moussalli argues: "... the most tangible effect of his trip to the States was his sympathy toward and readiness to co-operate with the Muslim Brethren."[50] Qutb subsequently rose quickly within its ranks and soon assumed the position of chief ideologue of the Party. At about the same time, the revolution of 1952 had thrust the Muslim Brotherhood into a unique position that allowed it to temporary share power with the Free Officers. Though still reeling from the death of al-Banna the Free Officers recognized the asset the Brotherhood would provide because of the large degree of support the Brotherhood could still garner within Egyptian society. Qutb himself was acutely aware of the significance of this moment in Egyptian history and the possibilities for Islam at a time of political and economic disintegration and the corresponding ideological vacuum such events created.[51]

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[46]. William E. Shepard, "Islam as a 'System' in the Later Writings of Sayyid Qutb," *Middle Eastern Studies* 25, no.1 (January 1989): 31-50, p. 32.

[47]. Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 25.

[48]. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 127.

[49]. Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics* (New Haven: Yale University, 1990), p. 22.

[50]. Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism*, pp. 30-31.

1952-1954 exemplify years of change in both the Brotherhood and Qutb's perception of the crippling problems faced by Egypt. While the 1952 revolution played a role in this transformation, it was the actions of the Free Officers after 1952 that most definitively affected his views. As in most revolutions, declared allies against the outgoing regime become hardened enemies as all vie for potential power. By 1954, after an alleged assassination attempt on Nasser's life, the Muslim Brotherhood were brutally crushed with many of its top leaders - including Qutb - being sent to concentration camps. It is clear that after 1954 the Free Officers assumed the status as the Muslim Brotherhood's greatest adversary, a position that had been previously allotted to the British.[52]

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[51]. Ibrahim, "Discourse, Power, and Ideology in Modern Islamic Revivalist Thought," p. 293.

The years of 1954-1966 symbolized a period of severe hardship for Qutb and other members of the Muslim Brotherhood as the Nasserist regime and the need to defeat it became Qutb's primary objective. In fact, along with his brief sojourn to the United States, it was the torture and harsh punishment received in Nasser's jails that played the greatest role in the radicalization of Qutb's thoughts and writings over the last decade of his life.[53] It was in this period that Qutb would create his most famous work *Milestones*, which still remains the revolutionary guide of most contemporary radical Islamic movements operating in the Middle East. It is ironic that Qutb wrote his manual under much the same conditions that Antonio Gramsci wrote *The Prison Notebooks*, and not surprisingly - as will be examined in terms of Gramsci in Chapter 3 - both shared principally the same views. To Qutb the primary aim must be, as Gramsci would state, to 'know thy enemy' in order to be able to challenge its power and eventually defeat it. Consequently, one of the first priorities of those members of the Muslim Brotherhood held in Nasser's concentration camps was to gather and form study groups to analyze the nature of the Nasserist State and to consider ways of confronting and destroying it.[54] Qutb may have used different language than Gramsci to put forth his argument - obviously utilizing the imagery and discourse of Islam - but it is clear that the aim of both was essentially the same. Both argued for the need to provide a clear counter-discourse to the dominant ideology of the time, that of the ruling power.[55]

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[52]. Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt: The Prophet and the Pharaoh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 37.

[53]. Ibid., p. 23.

[54]. Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 136. It is interesting to note that like Qutb, Gramsci spent the first two years of his time in prison (1927-

After being released from Nasser's concentration camps in 1964, Qutb was re-arrested the next year and tried for treason on the basis of his book *Milestones*. Qutb did not attempt to dispute the book's central aim which called for the immediate overthrow of the Nasserist regime. Qutb's hatred for the regime and his desire for its destruction was clear at his subsequent trial when Qutb addressed the damaging impact that Nasser's jails had inflicted upon him personally. According to Fouad Ajami:

> Over and over again in the proceeding, he [Qutb] recalled the haunting memories of the proceedings, he recalled the haunting memories of the 1950s: the interrogators, the prison cells, the attempt to break the spirit of the survivors, the loneliness of not knowing whether your 'brothers' betrayed or caved under, the forced confessions, and then, of course, the executions.[56]

In spite of Qutb's statements and pleas from foreign governments to spare his life, after a speedy trial Qutb was

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28) taking practical steps in 'politically' educating his followers in the nature of the struggle. See Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, eds. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. lxxxix.

[55]. Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 140.

[56]. Fouad Ajami, "In the Pharaoh's Shadow: Religion and Authority in Egypt," in *Islam in the Political Process*, ed. James P. Piscatori (Cambridge; New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1983), p. 24.

immediately found guilty and hanged by the Nasserist regime in August 1966. While Qutb's life was ended, his writings have survived and he has become both the principal theorist and chief martyr for the radical Islamic splinter groups that have arisen throughout the Middle East and Egypt, especially in wake of the Arabs' devastating defeat by the Israelis during the Six-Day War in June 1967. To many of the dispossessed and alienated, the Muslim masses now had their own Marx, a champion of the underclass.

AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI

Of all the ideologues examined in this section, only Ayatollah Khomeini was able to acquire the reins of power and install a government based on his own conceptions of an Islamic state, something which had eluded al-Banna, Mawdudi, and Qutb. In addition, another interesting difference between Khomeini and the previous 'fundamentalist' writers examined here is the advanced age at which Khomeini began what could be deemed his political vocation. Khomeini was sixty years old before he took an actively political stance with the radicalization of his views towards Islam and the White Revolution 1962-63 (see below). Finally, it must be remembered that unlike the other theorists examined in this chapter, Khomeini belonged to the Shiite, not Sunni, sect of the Muslim creed. This distinction not only affected his ability to conceptualize important facets of Islam, but also influenced certain organizational factors that allowed Khomeini to fill the political vacuum created by the Shah's downfall.[57]

Khomeini's early life is conspicuous by its lack of political activity. Born in 1903,[58] to a conservative family and educated in a rigorously religious fashion,[59] Khomeini became a member of the clerical establishment and a religious scholar at a young age. Though Khomeini did not actually produce any writings until *Kashf al-Asrar* in 1943, this early writing was in no way indicative of the hard-line political stances he would later assume towards the Shah. According to Ervand Abrahamian: "The most Khomeini asked in *Kashf al-Asrar* was that the monarch respect religion, recruit more clerics into parliament (*majles*) and ensure that state laws conformed with the sacred law."[60] In contrast to Khomeini the revolutionary whom the West would come to vilify, at this point in his life Khomeini took the position that in fact "bad government is better than no government."[61] Consequently, Khomeini's early views could be said to approximate more closely with those of medieval Islamic writers such as al-Mawardi (d.1058) and al-Ghazali (d.1111) who favoured all forms of tyranny over chaos. Far from challenging the power and authority of the State, Khomeini and the priestly caste allowed the clerical establishment to become a pillar of support to the Pahlavi regime.[62]

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[57]. One crucial difference between the Shiite and Sunni sects of Islam is that Shiism allows for the growth of a priestly hierarchy which permits power to concentrate in the hands of certain individuals. Conversely, Sunnism lacks this dimension. For more details, see below.

[58]. Though 1903 is the usual date given for Khomeini's birth it is tentative at best. On the one hand, Hamid Algar lists 1902 as his year of birth. Hamid Algar, *The Roots of the Islamic Revolution* (London: Open Press, 1983), p. 42. On the other hand, M.A.A. Montazam gives 1898 as Khomeini's birth year. M.A.A. Montazam, *The Life and Times of Ayatollah Khomeini* (London: Anglo-European Publishing, 1994), p. 175.

[59]. See Algar, *The Roots of the Islamic Revolution*, pp. 42-43.

[60]. Ervand Abrahamian, *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 20-21.

[61]. Michael M.J. Fischer, "Imam Khomeini: Four Levels of Understanding," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 166.

However, two significant events in the early 1960s radically altered both the role of the Shiite clergy in Iranian society and Khomeini's own views towards Iranian society and its leaders, especially the Shah. The first was the death of the Ayatollah Borujerdi in the early 1960s. In the case of the death of the powerful Ayatollah Borujerdi, the loss of his strong and ultraconservative leadership brought many of the long suppressed antagonisms into the light, as the struggle between conservative clerics and anti-Shah activists became more pronounced.[63]

However, it was the Shah's attempts at westernization and modernization included in the White Revolution of 1962-63 that signalled Khomeini's official entrance into the political arena. While certain policies involving substantial land reforms and the enfranchisement of women were denounced by Khomeini, his most scathing attacks were reserved for what he perceived as the Shah's subordination to foreign powers, such as the United States and Israel.[64] He believed that the Shah was doing irreparable harm to the country by allowing American advisers, U.S. military personnel, and their dependants, certain legal privileges and exemptions from Iranian jurisdiction, while in the process entrenching Iran's subordinate position vis-a-vis the West.[65]

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[62]. Abrahamian, *Khomeinism*, 9.

[63]. Fischer, "Imam Khomeini," p. 153.

[64]. Algar, *The Roots of the Islamic Revolution*, p. 49.

With the acrimonious nature of Khomeini's attacks increasing, after a particular virulent speech denouncing the Shah's pro-American policies the Shah decided to exile Khomeini.[66] In November 1964 Khomeini was sent to Turkey, and eventually settled in southern Iraq where he remained from 1965-1978. While the Shah had hoped these efforts would silence Khomeini, they in fact had the opposite effect. Khomeini not only continued his vociferous attacks against all aspects of the Shah's policy, he was now openly advocating the immediate overthrow of the regime.[67] In addition to these pronouncements, Khomeini was able to establish a broad power base within Iraq from which to continue his struggle against the Shah's corrupt and authoritarian regime.[68]

By 1970, with Khomeini's denouncements against the Shah's regime increasing, he now began to direct more criticism against what he perceived as an apolitical clergy that was implicitly supporting the continuation of the Shah's rule.[69]

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[65]. Zubaida, *Islam, the People, and the State*, p. 58. Also see Algar, *The Roots of the Islamic Revolution*, p. 49.

[66]. Montazam, *The Life and Times of Ayatollah Khomeini*, p. 155.

[67]. Algar, *The Roots of the Islamic Revolution*, p. 49.

[68]. Montazam, *The Life and Times of Ayatollah Khomeini*, p. 164.

[69]. Abrahamian, *Khomeinism*, p. 11.

As Abrahamian argues:

> Muslims, Khomeini insisted, have the sacred duty to oppose all monarchies. They must not collaborate with them, to have recourse to their institutions, pay for their bureaucracies, or practice dissimulation to protect themselves.[70]

In a sense, Khomeini was reiterating the Muslim tradition of *hijrah* or migration, which required the individual to separate oneself from his or her 'paganized' society.

It was also in 1970 that Khomeini, in a series of lectures, began to form the germ of his revolutionary thinking. No longer satisfied in simply advocating the Shah's overthrow, Khomeini now discussed how such a revolution could be achieved. According to Emmanuel Sivan:

> Khomeini's view was crystallized in his 1970 lectures before young Mullahs in Najaf, Iraq, his place of exile, and was set down in writing a year later in his book *The Islamic Government*. According to this view, the ulama were supposed to serve as the nucleus of the revolutionary vanguard to be led by the *mujtahidun* (ayatollahs), with the virtuous faqih, namely Khomeini, at their head.[71]

Consequently, by 1970, Khomeini was already forming the ideology, organization, and long-term strategy he deemed necessary to depose the Shah and to instill his own Islamic government.

Throughout the 1970s, Khomeini continued his attacks against the Shah and his regime. While Khomeini used generalities and the Islamic discourse of the oppressed and the need for social justice to enhance his support, he also directed his attack against specific aspects and policies of the Shah's regime. According to Abrahamian:

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[70]. Ibid., p. 24.

[71]. Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 191.

> Khomeini targeted the Shah on a host of highly sensitive socioeconomic issues. He accused him of widening the gap between rich and poor; favouring cronies, relatives, senior officials, ... wasting oil resources on the ever-expanding army and bureaucracy, ... failing to give land to the landless peasantry; condemning the working class to a life of poverty, misery and drudgery.[72]

It was apparent that by the mid-1970s Khomeini's propaganda was having a significant effect on the Shah. In response, as part of a March 1975 Agreement with Iraq, the Shah agreed to stop aiding the Kurds against Iraq if the Iraqis would take similar steps toward Khomeini. By 1978, the Iraqis obliged by exiling Khomeini to France.[73] However, by 1978, with his failing health, it soon became apparent that the Shah's regime was crumbling. Protests grew throughout 1978 culminating in an oil workers' strike in November. After months of unrest and with events continuing to spiral out of his control, the Shah was forced to take a 'vacation' in January 1979, a vacation from which he never returned. On February 1 1979, after thirteen years in exile, Khomeini returned to Iran the victor.[74]

While it would take three years for Khomeini to vanquish all his opponents within the revolutionary government - the liberals and communists finally being liquidated in September

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[72]. Abrahamian, *Khomeinism*, p. 30.

[73]. According to Montazam: "By September 1978, it had become unmistakably clear that Khomeini, from his residence in exile in nearby Iraq, was not only inspiring opposition to the shah's regime but was in fact orchestrating the rebellion." Montazam, *The Life and Times of Ayatollah Khomeini*, p. 166.

[74]. Algar estimates that approximately one third of the total population of Iran was in Tehran to welcome Khomeini's return. Algar, *The Roots of the Islamic Revolution*, p. 113.

1982 - Khomeini was able to coalesce the opponents of the regime behind the only movement that seemed to be able to provide the leadership, the organization, and the strategy, necessary to defeat the despised forces of the Shah. According to Zubaida:

> When the chance of open political action presented itself, the Islamic clergy was the only group that enjoyed organisation and resources which could be mobilised and directed in a concerted fashion. They also had leadership with great force and talent in the form of Khomeini.[75]

Consequently, the Islamists were able to eventually seize power in many ways because they were the only group perceived by the masses as able to defeat the Shah and his hated regime. This 'unity through opposition' triumphed in spite of the fact that perhaps ninety percent of the people who took part in the anti-shah demonstrations considered themselves neither Muslim fundamentalists nor particularly religious.[76]

The Islamists still remain in power in Iran, and this is no doubt significantly attributable to the personal charisma and leadership of Khomeini himself and his ability to organize and rally the anti-Shah forces around the banner of Islam. The fact that certain traditions within the Shiite sect differ from mainstream Sunnism in several important ways also played a role in Khomeini's ability to mobilize society against the Shah. Most of these differences revolve around the increased power of the Shiite Imam, including the payment of the *khums* which allows for greater financial independence, his intellectual monopoly as sole interpreter of the Koran, and the Shiite structure which allows for the development of a priestly caste and creation of a religious hierarchy. All of these factors clearly made it easier for Khomeini to organize and mobilize the Iranian masses.[77]

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[75]. Zubaida, *Islam, the People, and the State,* p. 60.

[76]. Montazam, *The Life and Times of Ayatollah Khomeini,* p. 170.

However, Khomeini and the other principle fundamentalist writers examined above share more similarities than differences and, in the end, promoted movements of ideology through the intertwining of thought and practice. It is through a brief examination of each of their lives that some insight has been shed on how their practical experiences manifested themselves into common theoretical beliefs. It is to these common beliefs we now turn in examining what could be termed the core of 'Islamic Political Doctrine' in the twentieth century.

THE ISLAMIC IDEOLOGY

OMNIPOTENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD (*HAKIMIYYAH*)

The overriding belief shared by all Islamic writers is the view that the Universe is controlled by one omnipotent God, whose rule over the cosmos is both natural and harmonious. Consequently, it is only logical that such a being should assert its divine authority over man (*hakimiyyah*). God's Laws, as found in the Koran, because they are eternal, fixed, and permanent, must take precedence over man-made legislation which is capricious, changeable, and utilized primarily as an instrument of domination and exploitation. In the Islamic system, the role of man is simply to implement God's Laws as a representative of the divine will on earth, not to utilize the law for his own desires and selfish interests.

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[77] For a more detailed examination of the differences between Shiite and Sunni political theory, see Sivan, *Radical Islam*, Chapter 7 "In the Shadow of Khomeini." In fact, Sivan comes to the conclusion that the differences between the two Islamic sects are so pronounced that an Islamic revolution in the Sunni world is quite improbable for a number of fundamental reasons.

Unquestionably, the most fundamental idea shared by all the Islamic writers examined above is the central belief that there is one omnipotent God (*Allah*) that has consummate control over all aspects of a world that He Himself created. As a result, they argue that the universe is one single organic unity created in complete harmony and ruled over by this one omnipotent God. God is the creator, the controller, the knower of all we say and do. According to Sayyid Qutb, in his book *Milestones*:

> God's wisdom underlies every decision and every condition. He administers the entire universe, and He is informed of its beginning and its end, controlling its events and interrelationships. He knows the wisdom hidden from us behind the curtains of the unseen, the wisdom which, in conjunction with His will, unfolds the long process of history.[78]

Mawdudi shares a similar view about the omnipotence of God. Thus, God's control reaches throughout the Universe "from the largest stars to the tiniest particle in the earth".[79] In this context, it is clear that it is this omnipotent God, as the controller of all facets of life and death, from which all the Islamic thinkers' writings originate.

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[78]. Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Cedar Rapids, IA.: The Mother Mosque Foundation, N.D.), p. 157.

[79]. Lerman, "Mawdudi's Concept of Islam," p. 497.

As previously mentioned, it is the Koran that remains the primary source of both guidance and reference for all Islamic doctrine. Consequently, the overarching power of God and His power as provider, creator, and knower of all we say and do is probably the single most important theme presented in the Koran. One such verse states:

> It is He who has sovereignty over the heavens and the earth. He ordains life and death, and has power over all things. He is the First and the Last, the Visible, and the Unseen. He has knowledge of all things.[80]

In another passage, an even more elaborate description of the greatness of God is given.

> He is God, besides whom there is no other deity. He is the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One, the Giver of Peace, the Keeper of the Faith; the Guardian, the Mighty One, the All-powerful, the Most High! Exalted be God above their idols! He is God, the Creator, the Originator, the Modeller. His are the most gracious names. All that is in heaven and earth gives glory to Him. He is the Mighty, the Wise One.[81]

In the view of the Islamists, it follows that since one supreme all-powerful God controls the Universe, this unity of God helps to instill a harmonious and natural order on earth. Consequently, only Islam, as opposed to other inferior systems of thought, can reproduce such an authentic representation of this harmonious Universe on earth.[82] Qutb argues that in this way only God, as representing this cosmic harmony, can provide man with what he needs to live a good and fruitful life.[83]

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[80]. N. J. Dawood, *The Koran* 5th Ed. (London and New York: Penguin Group, 1995), 55:2.

[81]. Ibid., 54:23.

[82]. Youssef Choueiri, "The Political Discourse of Contemporary Islamist Movements," in *Islamic Fundamentalism*, eds. Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (Boulder: Westview, 1996), p. 23.

From this examination it becomes apparent that since God is the predominant force in a harmoniously ordained Universe, it is only logical that God should also become dominant in the political sphere. Consequently, in the rulership of men, it is only natural that all humans should be judged according to God's Laws (i.e., those laws found in the Koran). As the omnipotent and most perfect force in the universe, God's Laws are inherently superior to all forms of man-made legislation. In asserting this superiority of divine law over man-made legislation Mawdudi states:

> The basic principle of Islam is that human beings must, individually and collectively, surrender all rights of lordship, legislation, and exercising of authority over others... None is entitled to make laws on his own authority and none is obliged to abide by them.[84]

Consequently, in Mawdudi's view, it is the presence or absence of the laws of God that is the most important factor in determining if a certain state can be regarded as authentically Islamic.[85]

The relevance of God's authority over man - both in terms of God as the ultimate judge of man and the necessity in believing and following the laws of God - is reasserted throughout the Koran. In regards to God as judge various passages can be cited. "I have no power to hasten that which you challenge: Judgement is for God only. He declares the truth and is the best of arbiters."[86] "Should I [Muhammad] seek a judge other than God when it is He who has revealed the book for you with all its precepts."[87] "Say: 'Lord, creator of the heavens and the earth, who have knowledge of the unknown and the manifest. You alone can judge the disputes of your servants'."[88] Thus, in the opinion of the main Islamic theorists, since God is the supreme knower and creator of the universe, it is only right that His Laws should reign supreme. Furthermore, since God has put forth those laws in the Koran, the Koran must constitute the immutable word of the Almighty One.

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[83]. See Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 88-90.

[84]. Abul A'la Mawdudi, *Political Theory of Islam* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1960), p. 18.

[85]. Ibid., p. 20.

The need for mankind to follow the *Sharia* or God's Laws as opposed to man-made legislation is obvious to the core Islamic writers for two principal reasons. First, only God's Laws can be viewed as eternal, fixed, and permanent. Hence, all knowledge and doctrine in legal matters, and especially those involving individual relationships (i.e., family law), must be based on divine revelation which is universal and absolute, and not rooted in human reason which is spurious.[89] In other words, God's Laws neither change nor evolve while human reason is based on scientific theory which is relative, as one theory simply replaces another at any given time. To Mawdudi and

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[86]. *The Koran*, 6:57.

[87]. Ibid., 6:115.

[88]. Ibid., 39:46. Other examples in *The Koran* include: 4:106, 5:48, and 5:51.

[89]. Choueiri, "Theoretical Paradigms of Islamic Movements," p. 109.

Qutb, it is this relative nature of secular legislation which deprives it of its moral sanction and hence its ability to make individuals comply with its laws.[90] Consequently, man-made legislation lacks the absolute standards that only laws based on the revealed and eternal word of God can provide.

The second factor accounting for the belief that man-made legislation is inferior to the law of God is the view that the laws enacted by man are not legislated for the good or benefit of man, but simply as an instrument by which rulers can oppress their subjects and allow the few to dominate over the many. In this way, law is not based on moral absolutes, but for the purpose of human control and the creation of a master-slave type of relationship.[91] Mawdudi is unequivocal on this point.

> [Y]ou will find that the root-cause of all evil and mischief in the world is the domination of man over man be it direct or indirect... The human soul is inevitably deprived of its natural freedom and man's mind and heart and his inborn faculties and aptitudes are subjected to such vexatious restrictions that the proper growth and development of his personality is arrested.[92]

Consequently, the Islamists argue that only an Islamic system of government can eliminate these abuses, and lead to the emancipation of the individual from the authority of others.[93] Gilles Kepel makes this point most succinctly when he states:

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[90]. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 106.

[91]. Mahmud Faksh, *The Future of Islam in the Middle East: Fundamentalism in Egypt, Algeria, and Saudi Arabia* (Westport: Praeger, 1997), p. 6.

[92]. Mawdudi, *Political Theory of Islam*, pp. 13-14.

[93]. Faksh, *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, p. 7.

> For Qutb, as for Mawdudi, the only legitimate sovereignty in a well governed polity is that of God. The principle of divine sovereignty is a guarantee against the discretionary power of the ruler: only that which bears the divine seal is just; only legislation governed by the book is immune to vitiation and to transformation into mere juridical machinery in the service of a despot.[94]

It is only in this fashion, when the moral absolutes of God replace the whims, desires, and self-interests of leaders, that man can truly be free from the domination and exploitation of his fellow man.

However, it is important to add that while man's role will no longer be to create legislation, as God's vice-regent, it will still be necessary for him to implement the laws of God. Since the laws of God are already provided in the Koran, there is no need to worry that rulers will manipulate these laws to further their own self-interests. Legislators are simply God's agents with no free will to deviate from God's stated laws.[95] They have neither the power to create laws nor the authority to impose their views on the people.[96] Furthermore, in a clear denunciation of western-imported institutions, such as democratic rule, Khomeini believes that "legislators are ... unnecessary, since all laws have already been provided by God."[97] In summary, the first core belief shared by the main Islamic theorists is quite clear. Since there is but one omnipotent God who has already bestowed to mankind all one needs to know within His book, there is no need to follow the whims and desires of men whose sole desire in creating such legislation is to further their own selfish interests and continue their domination and exploitation of their fellow man.

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[94]. Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 48.

[95]. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 106.

[96]. Adams, "Mawdudi and the Islamic State," p. 125.

[97]. Fischer, "Imam Khomeini," p. 158.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

The second core belief espoused by the principal Islamic theorists is their promulgation of a type of Islamic socialism. In this sense, Mawdudi was considered by some as a pioneer in the synthesis between socialism and Islam,[98] though Mawdudi would deny the influence of either European socialism or Marxism in his analysis.[99] Instead, the Islamists would point to the concepts of social justice developed in the Koran. In addition to these arguments regarding social justice is the related belief on the need to provide for the social security of the Islamic community while eliminating the continued economic dominance of one group or class over another. While general verses in the Koran are available to support these arguments, specific references are also cited regarding certain practical instruments which can be utilized in the redistribution of such wealth (e.g., the prohibition of charging interest). Finally, it is necessary to examine some of the Islamists' specific views towards private property to demonstrate that in spite of western accusations to the contrary, they do not prohibit private property, but believe that it is an integral part of a modern economy.

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[98]. Lerman, "Mawdudi's Concept of Islam," p. 500.

[99]. According to Hamid Enayat, most Islamists do not consider themselves socialists in that they are "trying to eradicate the differential inherent in human society." Instead their aim is to prevent the state "from becoming an instrument of exploitation and injustice." Hamid Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought* (London: Macmillan,

When examining the Islamists' ideas toward social justice it will become increasing clear in the next chapter that their arguments in this regard are defined and reflected by those specific groups and individuals that tend to support the 'fundamentalist' rhetoric. The Islamists tend to use many of the same ubiquitous terms in regards to social justice utilized by both Marxists and liberals. Words such as justice, equality, freedom, and brotherhood are used, along with concepts such as harmony, truth, and dignity. Of course, in most cases these terms remain primarily 'rallying slogans' that are seldom clearly defined or explained. As such, the Islamists promise their supporters that only Islam can create a truly "new ethical and moral order based on freedom, brotherhood, and justice for all."[100] In his book, *Social Justice In Islam,* Sayyid Qutb uses terms, such as those cited above, to define the foundations of his future Islamic state. According to Qutb:

> [I]n the final resort it [the Islamic state] is concerned with the observance of the religious law, with the care of society in every respect, with the establishment of justice and equality in society, and with the allotment of wealth according to the principles which are accepted by Islam.[101]

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[100]. Yvonne Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival," in *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, ed. John Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 67.

[101]. Sayyid Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), p. 87.

Mawdudi makes similar assertions in terms of Islam forming the perfect social order "in which all virtues will be able to flourish and all kinds of exploitation, injustice, and disorders ... are suppressed and prevented."[102] Yet, not surprisingly, throughout their writings Qutb and Mawdudi never offer a detailed program of how an Islamic state would attain these specified goals. Of course, in fairness, it would be easy to make similar accusations against those in both the Marxist and liberal camps.

In spite of these difficulties, it is clear that the Islamists are concerned with elevating the idea of a new social and economic order primarily through a moral framework. In fact, this has been a key component of the Islamists' program throughout the twentieth century. According to Mitchell:

> Banna, perhaps more than his followers, was single-minded about the 'moral' dimensions of economic behaviour, an approach admittedly inspired by the Muslim view of the indivisibility of man's morality.[103]

Qutb professes similar views on the importance of perceiving economic matters essentially through an emphasis on human values and morals. To Qutb, Islam clearly conceptualizes the relationship between economics and morals differently than in the West. Thus, where in the West material comforts are granted the highest value, to Qutb, 'human' characteristics, such as freedom, honour, and family are more highly regarded in an Islamic society.[104] Consequently, in the opinion of Qutb and other Islamists, it is the primacy of the moral over the economic, or at the very least, the economic defined within a moral framework, that clearly differentiates Islam from the ideologies and practices of the West.[105]

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[102]. Lerman, "Mawdudi's Concept of Islam," pp. 500-501.

[103]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 250.

As a core belief in the Islamists' doctrine it is necessary that a synthesis of Islam and socialism attract its supporters on both a practical level - an actual belief that their lives will improve - and from a theoretical or moral point of view - defined as an end to the oppression of one class or group over another. Both these components must be present to garner support for the Islamic cause. In its practical guise, it is clear that the Islamists are arguing for a program of social responsibility based on communal solidarity, mutual obligations, and social security to assist in protecting all members of society - especially the most vulnerable.[106] According to Ahmad Moussalli: "The nation as a whole is responsible for the protection and alleviation of the life of the weak as well as the poor and the needy."[107] In this sense, while the general welfare of the individual is important, clearly it is the interest of the community that must take precedence.[108] This point is most succinctly elaborated upon by Qutb:

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[104]. Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 96.

[105]. Or perhaps more succinctly, as R. Hrair Dekmejian asserts, "moral behaviour determines socioeconomic justice." Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution*, p. 45.

[106]. Choueiri, 1996, "The Political Discourse of Contemporary Islamist Movements," p. 25.

[107]. Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 189.

> Islam sets the principle of individual responsibility over against that of individual freedom; and beside them it sets the principle of social responsibility which demands alike on the individual and on society.[109]

Qutb later demonstrates the social responsibility that each individual owes towards the larger group when he states: "If any individual pass the night hungry, the blame attaches to the community because it did not bestir itself to feed him."[110] In this sense, no individual can be exempt from the care of the general interest if a person truly considers oneself a member of the greater community.[111]

While this view of the importance of the community over the individual assumes a central position in the Islamists' program, it is in terms of man's relationship to God that the Islamists are able to make their strongest arguments regarding social justice. These arguments necessarily revolve around the need for equality and involve the declared aim of ending man's oppression and dominance over his fellow man. Not surprising, this too was the ultimate goal in the Islamists' promotion of the idea of *hakimiyyah*. For Mawdudi, his aim and those of the Islamists in general are clear:

> They endeavour to evolve a social organization based on human equality in which man should be neither the slave nor the master of his fellow beings and in which all men should

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[108]. Ibid., p. 187.

[109]. Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, p. 56.

[110]. Ibid., p. 65.

[111]. Ibid., p. 62.

> become the servants of one real Lord.[112]

For Qutb, it is only through the ending of economic disparity that all men can truly be deemed equal and free. For true human equality is only possible when

> it is released from the tyranny of the values of social standing and wealth, it is saved from the humiliation of need and beggary, and it can rise superior to its desires and its bodily appetites.[113]

Therefore, to Qutb, economic equality and justice become a means to an end. And that end is the freedom from human domination and real justice and equality in the eyes of the one true God.

The arguments put forth by the Islamists against human oppression have their practical roots in contemporary society and are clearly based on the need to draw support from those segments of society most keenly affected by current socio-economic conditions (see Chapter 2). Yet, to the Islamists, the moral justification for these denunciations of grandiose wealth and overt oppression are present in the ultimate source of reference for the Islamists - the Koran. According to the Koran: "God enjoins justice, kindness, and charity to one's kindred, and forbids indecency, wickedness and oppression."[114] In addition, and perhaps more succinctly for the period in which Qutb was writing when he was imprisoned at the hands of the Nasserist State, the Koran asserts: "But it was our will to favour those who were oppressed and to make them leaders

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[112]. Mawdudi, *Political Theory of Islam*, p. 15.

[113]. Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, p. 45.

[114]. *The Koran*, 16:90.

among men and to bestow on them a noble heritage and to give them power in the land and to inflict on Pharaoh, Haman, and their warriors the very scourge they dreaded."[115] As this quotation demonstrates it is the need to attract those oppressed segments to their cause that leads the Islamists to argue for the attainment of a type of true equality which can only be provided by a social justice based on God's Laws and His message.

It has been argued so far that the Islamists' program and the actual policies they deem necessary to achieve social justice within contemporary Muslim societies lack precise solutions. However, the Islamists do employ the Koran to put forth three specific policies that were utilized by Muhammad to prevent hoarding and to create a more equitable distribution of wealth. These policies involve the *zakat* or poor tax, a more just dispersion of inheritance, and the prohibition of usury or the charging of interest.

The *zakat* or poor tax is regarded as one of the five pillars of the Islamic faith. The *zakat* is mentioned in the Koran, most specifically: "Know that one-fifth of your spoils shall belong to God, the Apostle, the Apostle's kinsfolk, the orphans, the destitute, and those that travel on the road."[116] To many Islamists, the fact that this remains one of the pillars of the Islamic faith demonstrates that Islam has the concept of social justice and charity at the very heart of its message. For al-Banna, the concept of the *zakat* is at the very core of his economic theory, believing it to be the most appropriate means for eliminating poverty and economic misery.[117] Mawdudi sees the zakat as a type of national insurance system which can provide for the needy, the aged, widows, and the sick,[118] while preventing an excessive individual hoarding of wealth.[119]

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[115]. Ibid., 38:5.

[116]. Ibid., 8:41.

The greater dispersion of inheritance was the second instrument to be utilized against the unfair accumulation of wealth. This would assist in improving the material condition of large segments of the underprivileged population. In Muhammad's time, a prominent occurrence was for the richer members of a family or tribe to use their superior wealth and power to eliminate or 'cut out' poorer or weaker members of the tribe. Therefore, for Muhammad it was necessary to allow both distant relatives and women to share in an inheritance in the attempt to provide sustenance for those weaker segments of the population. Previous to Muhammad's time, women were not legally allowed to inherit wealth even from a close family member. Yet, the Koran specifically states: "Men shall have a share in what their parents and kinsmen leave, and women shall have a share in what their parents and kinsmen leave: whether it be little or much, they shall be legally entitled to a share."[120] The use of inheritance as a tool for a greater distribution of wealth is advanced by al-Banna,[121] Mawdudi,[122] and Qutb.[123]

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[117]. Ismael and Ismael, *Government and Politics in Islam*, p. 67.

[118]. Ahmad, "Islamic Fundamentalism in Egypt during the 1930s and 1970s," p. 222.

[119]. Bahadur, *The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan*, p. 184.

The third policy advanced by the Islamists, and probably the most notable in the West, is the forbiddance of usury. Usury or '*riba*' refers to the charging of an 'unconscionable rate of interest.' Its familiarity to many in the West originates in the fact that many Islamic fundamentalist organizations throughout the Middle East have made banks - which obviously charge interest - a primary target for their radical violence. While the forbidding of charging interest is stated at various points in the Koran the clearest denunciation of it is as follows: "Those that live on usury shall rise up before God like men whom Satan has demented by his touch; for they claim that trading is no different from usury. But God has permitted trading and made usury unlawful."[124] Mawdudi is very clear in this distinction between acquiring wealth through trading and creating wealth through usury. As Mawdudi argues: "... productive capitalism ... is encouraged, while parasitic usury is forbidden."[125] Qutb's view of usury is identical to that of Mawdudi. For Qutb, usury "is the epitome of a parasitic system which is alien to the insistence of Islam on productive work and useful goods."[126]

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[120]. *The Koran,* 4:8.

[121]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers,* p. 252.

[122]. See Bahadur, *The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan,* p. 183, and Ahmad, "Islamic Fundamentalism in Egypt during the 1930s and 1970s," p.222.

[123]. Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism,* p. 196.

[124]. *The Koran,* 2:275.

[125]. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism,* p. 119.

It is important at this point to emphasize that despite the clear socialist leanings of a substantial portion of Islamic writings, many Islamists do not disavow what they perceive as the positive elements of capitalism, including the right to own private property. On the one hand, there are writers such as Sayyid Qutb who assume a more 'leftist' approach. Qutb takes the position that in Islam all members of society are "de jure shareholders of wealth,"[127] and since God remains the ultimate owner of all property, man is simply deputized to utilize property on God's behalf.[128]

However, this is not to suggest that all Islamists refuse to recognize the importance of property rights and believe that anyone can simply expropriate a person's land without a suitable pretext. In Abrahamian's opinion, Khomeini believes that "God had endowed man with private property, and consequently, no one had the right to deprive another of this divine gift."[129] In his *Vasiyat-nameh-e Elahi va Siyasi*, Khomeini "reminded the government that Islam 'recognizes private property,' 'free enterprise would turn the wheels of the economy,' and this, in turn would produce 'social justice' for all, especially the poor."[130] In the opinion of Mawdudi, for the most part, there are not any positive aspects of capitalism that cannot be reconciled with Islam. In fact, except for his objection to such capitalist traits as monopolies and finance capital,[131] he believes that an Islamic economic system represents an enlightened form of capitalism.[132] Even Qutb argues for the sanctity of wealth and the respect for private property.[133] Therefore, in summary, it would appear that the Islamists sought the positive aspects of capitalist development without many of its negative repercussions. Yet, as many in the West learned throughout the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century and many more in the Third World have discovered today, this kind of development without the corresponding pain, dislocation, and disruption just might not be attainable.

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[126]. Choueiri, "Theoretical Paradigms of Islamic Movements," p. 111.

[127]. Choueiri, "The Political Discourse of Contemporary Islamist Movements," p. 25.

[128]. Ismael and Ismael, *Government and Politics in Islam*, p. 52. Also see Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution*, pp. 45-46.

[129]. Abrahamian, *Khomeinism*, p. 40.

UNIVERSALITY AND TOTALITY OF THE ISLAMIC RELIGION

The third crucial principle shared by all the main Islamic writers is the notion regarding the natural universality and totality of Islam. In other words, Islam is - or at least should be - the religion of the entire world. Since Islam is God's religion, it is therefore the last and most perfect form of religion, at harmony with the entire universe and with the creator and ruler of that universe, *Allah*. In addition, since Islam is universal in its form, not discriminating against, nor defined by, class, race, or colour, Islam naturally denounces all forms of nationalism that attempt to divide the human race and artificially separate man from his brother. As previously examined, this denunciation of nationalism is especially relevant in the case of Mawdudi who used the pretext of the universality of Islam to argue vehemently against the creation of the explicitly Muslim nation-state of Pakistan (see above).

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[130]. Ibid., p. 42.

[131]. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 117.

[132]. Choueiri, "Theoretical Paradigms of Islamic Movements," p. 111.

[133]. According to Qutb, one of the explicit agreements between the ruler and the ruled in an Islamic state was that: "No ruler dare oppress the souls or the bodies of Muslims, nor dare he infringe upon their sanctities, nor touch their wealth." Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, p. 97.

Related to the universalism of Islam is the idea that Islam embraces the totality of human activity. Therefore, not only is there no division between the political and the religious spheres of human life as has occurred in the process of secularization in the West over the past 500 years, but to the Islamists, Islam is seen to permeate all components of the state and society. Therefore, Islam embraces not only the spiritual and moral realm, but also the social, political, and the economic. In Islam, as opposed to Christianity, the line between the public and private domains becomes blurred and Islam comes to represent a system complete unto itself, self-sufficient and autonomous in its ability to address all facets in the life of each individual.

It is clear from all the Islamic writers examined here that one of the outstanding characteristics of Islam is that it is universal in both its view and orientation. In fact, this aspect of Islam is innate to the religion itself, rooted in its very foundations. For Muslims, the founding of Islam was based on the explicit fact that Muhammad - as the last and final Prophet of God - assumed his role as God's messenger to correct the errors committed by the earlier 'Peoples of the Book,' the Jews and the Christians. Therefore, since Muslims deem Islam the 'true' religion of God it is only proper that Islam should be the exclusive religion of all the people of the world. The Koran is quite clear on this point.

> The only true faith in God's sight is Islam. Those to whom the Scriptures were given disagreed among themselves through jealousy only after knowledge had been given them. He that denies God's revelations should know that swift is God's reckoning.[134]

Even more succinct in the minds of the Islamists is the Koranic verse: "You are the noblest nation that has ever been raised up for mankind. You enjoin justice and forbid evil. You believe in God."[135] In the opinion of many Muslims, these verses embody the very heart of Islam as the only religion, through its very nature, that can lay claim to universal adherence and acceptance.

To accentuate this claim of universality, certain Islamic writers assert the essential oneness or unity of mankind. This is based on the fact that since we are all children of Adam, we are thus all equal in the eyes of God. Al-Banna emphasizes this universality of humanity through its common origin in Adam.[136] Sayyid Qutb concurs with al-Banna's views by stating:

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[134]. *The Koran*, 3:19.

[135]. Ibid., 3:110.

> [T]o impress on the mind of man the oneness of his origin and his growth. The human race as a whole is made from dust and the individual ... every individual from mere water... There was originally only one soul. From it came its mate; and from the two of them there spread abroad both men and women. So all are of one origin, all are brothers in descent, all are equal in origin and nature.[137]

Therefore, to Islamic theorists such as al-Banna and Qutb, the inherent unity of mankind is not simply a technique to assert Islam's claim as the only true religion in the eyes of God, but also to demonstrate that it is only through Islam that man can truly be equal and brotherhood reign supreme in an otherwise divisive and unjust world.

In terms of the Islamists' arguments regarding the inherent unity of mankind and the essential universality of Islam, like liberalism and communism, Islam as a political ideology does not attempt to confine its message to any one particular race or group of people. Consequently, it has viewed, and continues to perceive, the entire world as a potential convert to this righteous 'way of life.' Historically, during the greatest expansion of the Muslim Empire, many different ethnic groups all prospered under the singular banner of Islam: Arabs, Turks, Chinese, Indians, Africans, and Europeans. This universal aspect of Islam has remained a central tenet of all

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[136]. Hasan al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan al-Banna' (1906-1949): A* Selection from the Majmu'at rasa'il al-Imam al Shahid Hasan al-Banna (Translated by Charles Wendel) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), pp. 54-55.

[137]. Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam,* p. 47.

Islamic thinkers in the twentieth century. According to Richard Mitchell, this universal dimension of Islam forms a core component in the thought of Hasan al-Banna.

> Islamic nationalism transcends 'geographic boundaries, political divisions, and the varieties of colours, races, and languages' because it is found on the notion of 'the unity of humankind'; unlike limited nationalism, Islamic nationalism is divinely inspired by the triple principles of 'Godliness, humanitarianism, and internationalism.'[138]

Qutb concurs with this historical perspective of Islam by arguing that "Islam is not a heritage of any particular race or country, this is God's religion and it is for the whole world."[139] In fact, for all the Islamists examined here it is the universality of Islam and its dissociation from nationalist notions of race, colour, and language which remain its underlying strength.[140] Quite simply, in the view of these writers an individual is either a believer (a member of the Party of God: *Hizb Allah*) or a non-believer (a member of the Party of Satan: *Hizb Al-Shaytan*) regardless of his or her nationality or place of birth.[141] In the end, this is the only significant division that exists among the human race.[142]

It is clear from the following discussion that by defining itself strictly within a universal paradigm Islam naturally denounces all forms of nationalism as an attempt to divide the inherent unity and harmony of the human race. Not surprisingly, nationalism to the Islamists represents another foreign (i.e., Western) ideological invention created in detriment to the Muslim World. Like other western concepts, Islamists reject all notions of nationalism and the nation-state as Western creations, secular, God-less, and hence anti-Islamic,[143] whose sole purpose it seemed was to divide and conquer the Islamic world.[144]

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[138]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 269.

[139]. Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 175.

[140]. Choueiri, "Theoretical Paradigms of Islamic Movements," p. 111.

[141]. Ibid., p. 112.

[142]. It is ironic to note that the Islamists' division of the world into two hostile camps is similar to the environment that existed throughout the Cold War era (1945-1989), when 'liberal democracy' and communism confronted each other on a global scale.

Mawdudi, who did the bulk of his writing in the 1940s in the wake of two massive wars of destruction in Europe, argues that the primary cause of these wars was nationalism and is horrified that such great human sacrifice was incurred for the man-made creation of the nation-state. Not surprisingly, for Mawdudi, the only legacy of these seemingly artificially demarcated territorial creations appears to have been endless division and perpetual conflict among essentially similar peoples.[145] Consequently, in both instances, whether as a tool for aggression against the Islamic world or as a source of conflict between the Western powers themselves, nationalism has demonstrated its innately conflictual and divisive nature, while the Islamists argue that only Islam can be regarded as truly harmonious and unifying.

It is probably Sayyid Qutb, in his book *Milestones*, who is the most succinct in demonstrating Islam's unwillingness to either accept the jaded western concept of nationalism or to subscribe to its defining and divisive nature. According to Qutb:

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[143]. Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 38.

[144]. Barry Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. 122.

[145]. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 102.

> A Muslim has no country except that part of the earth where the Shariah of God is established and human relationships are based on the foundation of this relationship with God; a Muslim has no nationality except his belief, which makes him a member of the Muslim community in *Dar-ul-Islam*; a Muslim has no relatives except those who share the belief in God, and thus a bond is established between him and other believers through their relationship with God.[146]

A few pages later, Qutb contrasts the Islamic conception of nationalism - in other words universalism - to the way in which it is defined in the West.

> The homeland of the Muslim in which he lives and which he defends, is not a piece of land; the nationality of the Muslim, by which he is identified, is not the nationality determined by a government; the family of the Muslim, in which he finds solace and which he defends, is not blood relationships; the flag of the Muslim, which he honours and under which he is martyred, is not the flag of a country; and the victory of the Muslim, which he celebrates and for which he is thankful to God, is not a military victory. It is what God has described.[147]

As will be demonstrated, this 'universal' approach assumed by Qutb would have clear repercussions on later political Islamists. For contemporary 'fundamentalists' condemnation of nationalism, and hence the nation-state, has lead many Islamists not only to deny the existence of their own states, but also to affirm the necessity to combat this 'illegitimate' ruling force.

Clearly related to this espousal of Islam's inherent universalistic nature is the Islamists corresponding belief in its totality. Consequently, in all areas, be it social, political, or economic, or in the domains of the personal or private, the Islamists agree that the Islamic way of life is 'complete and total,' establishing itself on the foundations of both the 'practical and spiritual.'[148] Furthermore, this totality of Islam is rooted in the fact that it has one source, the Koran, from which all the solutions to contemporary problems can be derived.[149]

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[146]. Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 118-119.

[147]. Ibid., p. 124.

It is the totality of Islam and its declared ability to adequately address all the problems that a modern society encounters that has remained a key element in the writings of the twentieth century Islamists. It was Hasan al-Banna, as the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, that established the totality of Islam as a core component of his group's platform,[150] and in the process, transformed his movement from simply a religious organization to a political movement with clear socio-economic aims. This is demonstrated in the way Banna described his organization in 1938. According to Ismael and Ismael: "In specific terms he defined the movement as a Salafiyya message, a Sunni way, a Sufi truth, a political organization, an athletic group, a cultural-educational union, an economic company, and a social order."[151] Hasan al-Banna himself wrote that "we believe that Islam is an all-embracing concept which regulates every aspect of life, adjudicating on every one its concerns and prescribing for it a solid and rigorous order."[152]

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[148]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 233.

[149]. AbuKhalil, "The Incoherence of Islamic Fundamentalism," p. 691.

[150]. Ismael and Ismael, *Government and Politics in Islam*, p. 63.

[151]. Ibid., pp. 60-61.

Qutb and Mawdudi also emphasize the 'totalitarian' dimension of Islam, and its practical applicability to all aspects of human behaviour. For Qutb, the totality of Islam is based on his earlier statements regarding Islam's roots in equality and ending human oppression,[153] and its ability to address all aspects of human life, both the spiritual and social alike.[154] Mawdudi addresses many of the same factors regarding the totality of the Islamic system. Consequently, for Mawdudi, Islam must be seen as a comprehensive and transcendental world view,[155] and as the only total, universal ideology able to create and shape the perfect society on earth.[156] This is true even if revolutionary means are necessary, because only an Islamic state can adequately deal with the problems confronting the Muslim masses today.[157] As Lerman argues, Mawdudi believes that "if Islam is a total - and perfect - system, leaving no question unanswered, it logically follows that it cannot and should not co-exist with any other system."[158]

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[152]. Al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan Al-Banna' (1906-1949)*, p.46.

[153]. Ismael and Ismael, *Government and Politics in Islam*, p. 111.

[154]. Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, p. 55.

[155]. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 120.

[156]. Lerman, "Mawdudi's Concept of Islam," p. 507.

[157]. Mawdudi, *The Islamic Movement*, p. 100.

Therefore, it is clear that the totality of Islam is necessary for two reasons. First, the fact remains that only Islam has the flexibility to deal with all the problems encountered by contemporary societies, because it is God's chosen religion, universal in nature and thus rooted in the fundamental equality of man. Second, any attempt to mix Islamic solutions with those derived from foreign concepts - presumably Western - will be doomed to failure. Hence, the Islamists argue that Islam represents a complete system of life, self-sufficient,[159] and therefore it is unnecessary to borrow from Western and secularized modes of thought. According to Qutb: "Islam ... is a complete unity and a homogeneous unity and to introduce any foreign element into it would ruin it, like a delicate and perfect mechanism..."[160] Therefore, only Islam, both as a universal and total way of life, can provide the practical solutions necessary to solve the problems confronting all contemporary Muslim societies.

A STRIDENT ANTI-WESTERN STANCE

The fourth component of political Islamic doctrine is its 'dogmatically' anti-western stance. In this sense, the position adopted by the Islamists does not just involve a rejection of all things western, but for theorists such as al-Banna and Qutb, an ardent hostility towards the West. As was examined earlier in the short biographies of each, this is probably not surprising since al-Banna was reminded of the British occupation of Egypt on a daily basis, while Qutb's attitude towards the West was dramatically altered during his stay in the United States in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Mawdudi, on the other hand, having experienced far less direct contact with the West was at the same time apparently more at ease with accepting certain western concepts, such as capitalism. Yet, for the most part, these writers all share a common disdain of western ways. Furthermore, they all adamantly reject associating their conception of Islam with any concepts derived from the West, such as socialism, capitalism, nationalism, and secularism. Therefore, Islam is neither to be identified with, nor interpreted in terms of, western ideologies or concepts. As a consequence, Islam is to be viewed as both unique and separate from the West. Yet, it is important to note that while the Islamists perceive the West as a 'sick and decaying society' and reject its moral standards, the Islamists are prepared to accept the science and technology provided by the West. In other words, they may be willing to reconcile the principles of Islam with those of the West if the benefits procured by using science and technology can assist in the advancement of their own societies.

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[158]. Lerman, "Mawdudi's Concept of Islam," p. 498.

[159]. Faksh, *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, p. 15.

[160]. Shepard, "Islam as a 'System in the Later Writings of Sayyid Qutb," p. 38.

It is clear that of all the Islamists examined above, al-

Banna exhibits the most hostile attitudes towards the West. Certain writers have even labelled his views as bordering on xenophobia.[161] However, as previously explained, al-Banna was confronted with the actual conditions of Western imperialism and its constant humiliations on a daily basis. In the opinion of al-Banna, the division of the Islamic world had long been a deliberate plan of the Western powers, alluding to images of 'the clash of civilizations' which has its antecedents as far back as the crusades of the Middle Ages. Yet, to al-Banna, it was only in the nineteenth century, after having gained definite superiority vis-a-vis the Islamic world, that

> Europe began to work earnestly at dismembering the powerful, far-flung Islamic state and to lay numerous plans toward this end, referring to them at times as "the Eastern Question" and at others as "dividing up the inheritance of the sick man of Europe."[162]

In fact, al-Banna goes as far to state that the dismemberment of the Islamic State - the Ottoman Empire - had been a key component in all European states' foreign policies since the "revolutions of the Reformation."[163]

However, in al-Banna's opinion, the political imperialism perpetrated by the West against the Islamic world paled in comparison to the West's cultural penetration and its attempts to destroy the very fabric of Muslim society. According to al-Banna:

> This being insufficient [political imperialism] for them, they founded schools and scientific and cultural institutes

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[161]. Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt*, p. 148.

[162]. Al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan Al-Banna' (1906-1949)*, p. 2.

[163]. Ibid., p. 22.

> in the very heart of the Islamic domain which cast doubt and heresy into the souls of its sons and taught them how to demean themselves, disparage their religion and their fatherland, divest themselves of their traditions and beliefs, and to regard as sacred anything Western in the belief that only that which had a European source could serve as a model to be emulated in this life.[164]

Al-Banna is not unique in his depiction of the inherent dangers present in Western attempts at cultural imperialism. Qutb also warns that spiritual and mental imperialism is the real danger confronting Muslim societies. Qutb believes that its covert nature differentiates it from military or political imperialism which is more likely to inspire opposition.[165] John Esposito most succinctly summarizes the attitudes of the Islamists towards the encroaching cultural and spiritual imperialism of the Western powers.

> Indeed, they [the Islamists] regarded the religiocultural penetration of the West (education, law, customs, and values) as far more pernicious in the long run than political intervention, since it threatened the very identity and survival of the Muslim community.[166]

While it is clear that it was primarily the recent colonial exploitation penetrated by the British against the Egyptians that influenced al-Banna's views, like his Islamic compatriots, he uses verses from the Koran to justify his ardent rejection and denunciation of all things Western. In one such verse the Koran states:

> Believers, do not make friends with any but your own people. They will spare no pains to corrupt you. They desire nothing but your ruin. Their hatred is evident from what they utter with their mouths, but greater is the hatred which their breasts conceal.[167]

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[164]. Ibid., p. 28.

[165]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 230.

[166]. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 122.

[167]. *The Koran*, 3:118.

In a subsequent verse, the Koran states: "Believers, if you yield to the infidels they will drag you back to unbelief and you will return headlong into perdition."[168] It is clear that in the context of the Koran these verses specifically refer to Muhammad's own opponents within the Arab population of his time - the Hypocrites (see Chapter 4) - but for al-Banna and others, it is easy to adapt this view to mean any non-believer, hence, a Westerner.

While al-Banna is the most openly hostile to the West per se, all the principal Islamist writers share the view that, while the West at present is the world's dominant force, Western civilization has reached its zenith and is now entering a period of long and steady decline. Al-Banna believes the cause of this decline is rooted in the excessive individualism or the lack of community spirit practised in the West.[169] As for Mawdudi, he believes that Western decline is based on its purely materialistic orientation, and hence those things that would be revered in an Islamic state, such as piety, truthfulness, and virtue are no longer deemed relevant.[170]

It is probably not surprising that al-Banna and Mawdudi perceive such decay, not only morally, but economically, politically, and socially, since the bulk of their works were written in the period of the Great Depression and the Second World War. For his part, while writing to King Faruq in May-June 1947, al-Banna states:

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[168]. Ibid., 3:149.

[169]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 226.

[170]. Freeland Abbott, *Islam and Pakistan*, p. 180.

> Its [the West] foundations are crumbling, and its institutions and guiding principles are falling apart. Its political foundations are being destroyed by dictatorships, and economic foundations are being swept away by crises.[171]

Eran Lerman is even more succinct when he assesses Mawdudi's view of the West during approximately the same period.

> Where Sir Sayid Ahmad Khan saw a triumphant world power, Mawdudi saw a sick and declining civilisation... The world war, the economic problems, increasing unemployment, the spread of contagious diseases, and the deterioration of family order - all these are manifest omens.[172]

In many ways, it is hard to fault writers such as al-Banna and Mawdudi for possessing such a pessimistic view. Such beliefs were probably shared by many in the West who, after such devastation, thought they too had seen the end of the Western 'civilization' they once knew.

It is important at this point to state a certain qualifying point regarding the Islamists' views towards the West. While the Islamists may reject many of the moral standards and social ethics and values of the West, the Islamists are also conscious of the important, even crucial, necessity in acquiring the science and technology that in their view had permitted the West to reach such an advanced and superior position vis-a-vis the Muslim world. Hasan al-Banna, in spite of his impassioned stance against the West, accepts the need for technology. Once more he justifies his position by citing specific verses from the Koran which he believes defend their usage. In a general sense, he quotes the verse: "Say: 'Behold what the heavens and earth contain.'"[173] For al-Banna, this is God's invitation to study all the world has to offer. More specifically, he cites the Koranic verse:

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[171]. Al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan Al-Banna' (1906-1949)*, p. 106.

[172]. Lerman, "Mawdudi's Concept of Islam," p. 503.

> Did you not see how God sent down water from the sky with which We brought forth fruits of different hues? In the mountains there are streaks of various shades of white and red and jet-black rocks. Men, beasts, and cattle have their different colours too.[174]

To al-Banna, this is an admonition to explore the natural sciences. Thus, he interprets this passage as an invitation for man to study such diverse topics as astronomy, botany, chemistry, geology, and biology.[175] In al-Banna's own words:

> The Quran does not distinguish between secular and religious science, but advocates both, summing up the natural sciences in our verse, expostulating on their behalf and making knowledge of them a means of reverencing Him and a path toward knowing Him.[176]

Like al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb is vociferous in his denunciation of Western morals, but a strong proponent of the need to accept and integrate Western science and technology. In spite of some accusations to the contrary, Qutb never denies the importance of acquiring western technology. Even in his earlier works, such as *Social Justice in Islam,* Qutb unequivocally states: "Islam does not oppose science or the utilization of science; there is nothing contrary to the spirit of Islam in culling the fruits of science from all the sources of the world."[177] In *Milestones*, Qutb is even more succinct in asserting that science and technology are not only beneficial to Muslims, but contain nothing which in itself is contrary to the teachings of God. In considering the benefits of science and technology Qutb states: "Islam does not look with contempt on material progress and material inventions; in fact, it considers them when used under the divine system of life, as God's gifts."[178] A couple of pages later, Qutb reiterates this point when he states: "[I]n fact, material prosperity and scientific progress are encouraged by the teachings of Islam, as they pertain to man's role as the representative of God on earth."[179]

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[173]. *The Koran,* 10:101.

[174]. Ibid., 35:27.

[175]. Al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan Al-Banna' (1906-1949),* pp. 115-116.

[176]. Ibid., pp. 115-116. As for Richard Mitchell, he states that Banna "suggested that education should be neither purely Islamic nor purely secular (i.e., Western) but should harmoniously blend religious character and moral training with scientific training." Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers,* p. 285.

However, while Qutb is willing to accept the benefits of Western science and technology, he does establish certain parameters regarding the spiritual, cultural and moral realms through which these subjects can be taught. In reference to these exceptions Qutb states:

> But Islam does not permit Muslims to learn the principles of their faith, the implications of their concept, the interpretation of the Quran, Hadith, the Prophet, the philosophy of history, the traditions of their society, the constitution of their government, the form of their politics, and similar branches of knowledge, from non-Islamic sources or from anyone other than a pious Muslim

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[177]. Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, p. 252.

[178]. Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 100-101.

[179]. Ibid., pp. 103-104. In fact, Qutb justifies this stance by asserting that God was pro-material progress based on the Koranic verse: "He sends down abundant water from the sky for you and bestows upon you wealth and children. He has provided you with gardens and with running brooks." *The Koran*, 71:11-12.

> whose faith and religious knowledge is known to be reliable.[180]

Qutb's stance on this issue - the scientific versus the non-scientific world - reflects the common view of most traditional Islamic theorists. Consequently, purely scientific subjects fall beyond the legal sphere of Islam, "while social matters, acts of devotion, and all that pertains to man's soul and mind were firmly placed under its jurisdiction."[181] In the opinion of Qutb and others, there is no denying the benefits procured by science and technology as long as the accompanying 'baggage' of western morals and values are not included.

However, is it actually possible for those like Qutb to 'pick and choose' those aspects of the West they deem acceptable, while unequivocally rejecting its standards and values? While a question like this is clearly beyond the scope of this study, something must be stated on this issue. In addressing this very question Wendel states that

> al-Banna believed that it was possible to pick and choose those aspects of Western civilization that he could accept as compatible with Islamic doctrine and morality, and neatly excuse the rest.[182]

Yet, as other societies have learned and continue to realize today, the attempt to garner Western science and technology, and hence modernization, without the corresponding contamination of 'Western' values has always proved a very elusive goal.[183]

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[180]. Ibid., p. 112.

[181]. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 99.

[182]. Wendel, *Five Tracts of Hasan Al-Banna' (1906-1949)*, p. 3.

CONCEPTIONS OF LEADERSHIP, ORGANIZATION, AND STRATEGY (*JIHAD*)

The final area in which the Islamists share similar views concerns their approach to the broader notions of leadership, organization, and the long-term strategies they propose. While each of these areas is subtly different from the other, they are all intimately linked to the greater aim of acquiring power through the overthrow of the current ruling elites and the destruction of the socio-political order on which that power is based.[184] In other words, each area represents a facet of the struggle which has as its primary aim the construction of a revolutionary force able to capture state power. According to Choueiri:

> Qutb, al-Mawdudi, and Khomeini articulated a new Islamic theory and established the contemporary discourse of a variety of Islamic political organizations. To them, change had to be total, comprehensive, and revolutionary. They saw no possibility of coexistence between Islam and other political or social systems.[185]

The concept of leadership assumes a central role for the Islamists. Consequently, both the model of Muhammad as the ideal leader and his example as a revolutionary leader are emphasized, along with the ideal relationship he created between his leadership and the followers of his movement.[106] This leads directly into the organizational framework of the movement and the characteristics and qualities necessary to advance the aims of the revolutionary movement. The creation of both an inner circle or vanguard, along with the obedience and loyalty of a dedicated following are crucial components of any successful Islamic movement. Finally, their long-term strategy is intimately linked with the first two factors. For the Islamists, their strategy can be succinctly stated as one of education, separation, and confrontation. This first involves the educating or instilling of Islamic principles into the hearts and minds of their followers. Once these principles have been entrenched in their supporters the Islamists proceed to separate themselves from, and become independent of, their surrounding environment. This involves the subsequent designation of two parties or groups destined towards inevitable confrontation. This idea will be examined in the context of Qutb's promotion of the concept of '*jahiliyyah.*'[107] As the Islamists understood, only the creation of a counter-discourse vis-a-vis the dominant ideology of the state, equipped with the necessary tools to infiltrate civil society, would be strong enough to confront and destroy the ruling power. Consequently, it must be through the conduct of '*Jihad*' (Holy Struggle) that the Islamists are able to carry the banner of Islam to victory against their secular and heathen enemies.

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[183]. Mortimer, *Faith and Power*, p. 91.

[184]. These three components - leadership, organization, and long-term strategy - will be more clearly examined in Chapter 3 in the context of a Gramscian theoretical framework.

[185]. Choueiri, "The Political Discourse of Contemporary Islamist Movements," p. 32.

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[106]. The role of leadership in the revolutionary process as exemplified by Muhammad will be examined more closely in Chapter 4. At this point, it should suffice to state that Muhammad, as the dominant figure in the early Islamic movement, left a legacy regarding the important function of the leader both in terms of his nobility of character and the strategies necessary for the actual acquisition of power.

[107]. *Jahiliyyah* is literally defined as the 'land of ignorance' or the time before the Prophet Muhammad. As will be examined, Qutb's unique use of the word and his application of this concept against his own society became a key component of his revolutionary struggle. For a more thorough explanation of this term see pp. 100-104.

It is not surprising that the concept of leadership assumes a central position in the works of al-Banna, Mawdudi, and Khomeini, since each was actually the leaders of his own Islamic movements, and therefore clearly understood the attributes necessary for such a position. As the founder of the original twentieth century Islamist organization, al-Banna was regarded as the authoritarian centre of all power within the Muslim Brotherhood.[188] In terms of al-Banna's position as the undisputed leader of the Brotherhood, Christina Harris argues that

> Hasan Al-Banna was the Brotherhood in the early stages of its development. He gave his Brethren (Ikhwan) their group characteristics as well as their program; he inspired them with his ardour and his sincerity; and his magnetic personality attracted an ever swelling stream of adherents to the movement.[189]

According to Mitchell, al-Banna perceived his own leadership role as that "of a spokesman who would analyze Egypt's ills and successfully prescribe the remedies which would guide her out of her multi-dimensioned wilderness."[190] However, in the case of al-Banna, it is clear that it was his strength of leadership and charismatic ability that, above all else, was the determining factor in the early success of the Muslim Brotherhood. This is no more clearly demonstrated than in the fact that since his death no leader has been able to unite the Brotherhood and repeat al-Banna's earlier success in terms of either popular support or political influence.[191]

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[188]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 295.

[189]. Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt*, p. 151.

[190]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 296.

While al-Banna's leadership qualities demonstrated his organizational and practical skills, Mawdudi seemed more interested in a leader's moral characteristics and the way in which a successful leader is able to create a definitive revolution in leadership.[192] In other words, it will be the leader's own character, which he diffuses throughout society, that will have the greatest influence in shaping the values and morals of his followers. Adams emphasizes the overriding importance Mawdudi places on leadership when he states: "He [Mawdudi] considered that everything in the life of a society depends upon its leadership, that a society will go exactly where the ruler as the centre of power determines that it should go."[193] For Mawdudi, the character and conduct of the ruler - which should be both pious and commendable - is the most important attribute of a successful leader.[194] Therefore, regardless of a leader's practical skills it is in fact his own moral conduct that will determine the eventual direction of society, and as a result, a moral ruler will naturally create a more moral and just society.

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[191]. Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*, p. 12.

[192]. Mawdudi, *The Islamic Movement*, p. 71.

[193]. Adams, "Mawdudi and the Islamic State," p. 130.

[194]. Ibid., p. 124.

It is not surprising that Khomeini - as the one leader examined here who actually achieved state power - places a strong emphasis on leadership and the specific qualities necessary to rule an Islamic nation. In the construction of an authentic Islamic order, Khomeini concurs with Mawdudi that such a state is rooted most directly, not in the institutions of the state (i.e., the *Sharia*), but in the moral characteristics and qualities of its leadership.[195] In the unique case of Iran under Khomeini, Hamid Enayat specifically refers to Khomeini's concept of the 'guardianship of the jurisconsult.'

> [W]hat distinguishes the regime set up by the Islamic revolution from all such antecedents is a notion related not so much to the nature of the political order, but to the person or persons considered to be solely qualified to act as the ultimate rulers or arbitrators of that political order.[196]

Therefore, as we shift from the ideal (Mawdudi) to the practical (Khomeini) it is clear that in both cases the question of leadership remains central to the ideology and program of the Islamists.

The second crucial factor to be examined, which is intimately tied to the question of leadership, is the role of the Islamic organization in the revolutionary struggle. While the leadership constitutes one element of the revolutionary organization, two additional components are also crucial to the contemporary Islamists. The first involves the inner circle of the organization, or what is described as the 'vanguard' of the party. The second concerns the relationship between the leadership of the movement and the masses, and consequently, the degree of obedience and loyalty required from this group of dedicated followers if the Islamic movement is to be successful in its ultimate objectives.

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[195]. Ayubi, *Political Islam*, pp. 146-147. Also see Hamid Enayat, "Iran: Khumayni's Concept of the Guardianship of the Jurisconsult," in *Islam in the Political Process*, ed. James P. Piscatori (Cambridge: New York: Royal Institute Of International Affairs, 1983), p. 165.

[196]. Enayat, "Iran," p. 160.

Each of the principal Islamic theorists examined here - both in terms of his writings and political actions - exhibits a clear understanding on the need to create an 'inner circle' or vanguard. For his part, Mawdudi addresses the moral qualities and attributes necessary for those certain individuals who wish to play a more prominent role in the development of the Islamic movement.[197] Meanwhile, according to Mitchell, al-Banna's vanguard or inner circle is "a group of the most dedicated and active members, on whom could be placed the primary burden of serving God and the message."[198]

However, as the paramount leaders of their respective movements it would seem that both al-Banna and Mawdudi were more interested in retaining as much power and control as possible. In fact, it would appear that they sought to delegate little, if any, power to those around them. When one examines the actual conceptualization of the Islamic vanguard it is Sayyid Qutb - a high-ranking member, though not the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood - who most significantly contributes to this concept in his work *Milestones*. Qutb examines this issue of the Islamic vanguard, or the 'vanguard of the *umma*,'[199] early in *Milestones* when he states:

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[197]. See Mawdudi, *The Islamic Movement*, pp. 72 and 95.

[198]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 31.

> It is necessary that there should be a vanguard which sets out with this determination and then keeps walking on the path, marching through the vast ocean of *Jahiliyyah* which has encompassed the entire world. During its course, it should keep itself somewhat aloof from this all-encompassing *Jahiliyyah* and should also keep some ties with it.[200]

It is true that Qutb himself only mentions the term 'vanguard' once in *Milestones*,[201] but next to his use of the concept of *'Jahiliyyah,'* the need for an Islamic vanguard is seen as his most important contribution to Islamic revolutionary discourse. Its central importance in the book *Milestones* is addressed by authors such as Youssef Choueiri[202] and Gilles Kepel.[203] While the role of a 'vanguard' is associated more with Qutb than al-Banna and Mawdudi per se, it is obvious that all three share the view that a "coalition of committed individuals" is necessary in forming the core and the "vital organic cell" of the movement,[204] since without such a dedicated group the *jahiliyyah* society will never be confronted, let alone destroyed.

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[199]. According to Kepel, when addressing the issue of 'What is to be done?' Qutb speaks of the need for "a genuine revolution under the leadership of a 'vanguard of the *umma*' which must take as its example 'the sole Koranic generation,' namely the companions of the Prophet." Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 53.

[200]. Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 12.

[201]. While this is true, later in *Milestones*, Qutb does make the following allusion to the Islamic vanguard when he states: "These three individuals increase to ten, the ten to a hundred, the hundred to a thousand, and the thousand increase to twelve thousand - and the Islamic society grows and becomes established." Ibid., p. 102.

[202]. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 126.

[203]. Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 46. For other examples see Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*, p. 50, and Shepard, "Islam as a 'System' in the Later Writings of Sayyid Qutb," p. 33.

After the leadership, and 'vanguard,' the third aspect of the organization that needs to be addressed is that of the followers, or its mass element. In other words, it is important to address the crucial role performed by the individual within the greater Islamic movement. For Mawdudi, the individual is the essential building block of the movement, and thus the success of the organization is necessarily rooted in individual commitment, conduct, and character,[205] and the willingness of individual members of the movement to translate Islam from simply a religion into a total and complete way of life.[206]

In examining the role of the individual within the larger movement it is clear that the Islamic theorists have a specific view regarding the ideal relationship that should exist between the leaders and the led of any Islamic movement. In terms of both Islamic political theory and its practical organizational application this ideal relationship assumes a position of crucial importance. Al-Banna uses the term 'social solidarity' in describing the association between the leader and his followers,[207] in which ruler and ruled form a type of social contract.[208] Meanwhile, according to Sayyid Qutb: "Political theory in Islam rests on the basis of justice on the part of the rulers, obedience on the part of the ruled, and collaboration between ruler and ruled."[209]

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[204]. Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb," p. 87.

[205]. See Bahadur, *The Jama'at-i-Islami of Pakistan*, pp. 29 and 141. As was the case with Mawdudi's conceptions regarding the 'relativity' of human nature, Mawdudi's willingness to emphasize the essential role of the individual within the greater movement once more corresponds to Gramsci's position on the contemporary revolutionary process. As will be examined more thoroughly in Chapter 3, one of the factors that differentiated Gramsci from many of his fellow Marxists is his view that it is the quality of the individual (his character), not just the quantity of supporters (sheer numbers), that will determine the success of the revolution. See Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 268.

[206]. Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb," p. 88. In this sense, Mawdudi argues: "This state of [Islamic] consciousness does not appear in any one form or in any particular sphere; instead, it manifests itself in an individual's whole way of thinking and in all his actions." Mawdudi, *The Islamic Movement*, p. 117.

In reference to certain fundamental characteristics, such a relationship should be defined in terms of a faith in, and obedience and loyalty towards, both the specific leadership and to the more general aims of the movement. Al-Banna is very clear on the need for individual Brethren to believe in their ideology and to have a deep faith in their religion and its goals,[210] while Mawdudi argues that only a solid and unquestioning faith can provide the foundations for a truly Islamic system.[211] However, it is probably Qutb whom best summarizes the importance and role of an untiring faith in the truth of one's beliefs. According to Qutb:

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[207]. Al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan Al-Banna' (1906-1949)*, p. 16.

[208]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 247.

[209]. Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, p. 93.

[210]. Al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan al-Banna' (1906-1949)*, p. 33.

[211]. Mawdudi, *The Islamic Movement*, pp. 79-80 and 111.

> The superiority through faith is not a mere single act of will nor a passing euphoria nor a momentary passion, but is a sense of superiority based on the permanent truth centred in the very nature of existence.[212]

In each case, the role of unquestioning faith in the aims of the movement form the foundation on which any organization must be constructed if the 'truth' of these goals are to be realized through concerted action.

While an unbending faith in the ultimate goals of the movement is important, clearly in terms of the ideal relationship sought between the leaders and the led, it is unswerving obedience that the Islamic leaders examined here most adamantly demand. On the point of obedience to the leadership al-Banna is unequivocal: "Listen and obey your leaders both in duress and comfort, in good times and bad, for this is the token of your conviction and the bond of solidarity among you."[213] According to Mitchell: "From the early days of the movement, Banna made these qualities of obedience to and confidence in the leadership cardinal features of the dynamic of the organization in the minds of his followers..."[214] Yet, as al-Banna correctly understood, obedience cannot be demanded from one's followers, but must be given voluntarily and without duress. Consequently, because of his own leadership qualities and personal charisma al-Banna was seemingly able to consistently receive the unswerving obedience of his followers.[215]

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[212]. Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 141.

[213]. Al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan Al-Banna' (1906-1949)*, p. 37.

[214]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 301.

Certain concepts relating to the overriding need for obedience, loyalty, and discipline within the Islamic movement are also notions that assume a central prominence in the works of both Mawdudi and Qutb. In fact, these core concepts were central to the very creation of Mawdudi's Jamaat-I-Islami in August 1941, since Mawdudi believed that only an organized and disciplined group of dedicated Muslims could create a truly Islamic state in the Indian subcontinent.[216] Meanwhile, in reference to the role of loyalty in his ideal Islamic movement Qutb states: "He [the Muslim] will have to give his complete loyalty to the new Islamic movement and to the Muslim leadership."[217] At another point, Qutb address these issues when he examines the role of the organization in providing "a sense of instruction for obedience and action."[218] In stressing this need for discipline within such an organization Qutb draws on the example of the early Muslims under the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad to demonstrate that obedience is mandatory even if the individual may dislike certain injunctions or find them distasteful.[219] By utilizing this example Qutb not only is able to reaffirm the need for individual obedience, loyalty, and discipline in the confrontation against contemporary *jahiliyyah* society, but by associating these traits to the companions of the Prophet he is able to demonstrate that these qualities are in fact the noblest of all characteristics to everyone who considers themselves a good and pious Muslim.

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[215]. Ibid., p. 302.

[216]. Adams, "Mawdudi and the Islamic State," p. 105.

[217]. Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 48. Also see p. 20.

[218]. Ibid., p. 21.

[219]. Ibid., p. 66.

In describing in general terms the movement's overall organizational structure, and more specifically, the ideal relationship sought between the leaders and the individual members of the movement, such a relationship is sometimes conceptualized within an organic analogy - what Gramsci terms an 'organic unity' (see Chapter 3). In other words, only if the leadership and the individual members of a certain movement can create an organic whole which achieves "harmony between its individuals and activities,"[220] and which is an active and vital representation of the Muslim community,[221] can such a movement reach its revolutionary objectives. According to Mawdudi, an organic analogy is helpful in demonstrating the type of ideal relationship sought between the leaders and the led of an Islamic movement.

> And just as even though the tree may spread in all directions, all its leaves and branches remain firmly attached to the roots and derive substance from them and it is always the seed and the root which determine the nature and form of the tree, similar is the case with Islam.[222]

Consequently, if the seed (Islam) is planted and creates strong roots of leadership, the tree and its branches

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[220]. Ibid., p. 103.

[221]. Ibid., p. 37.

[222]. Mawdudi, *Political Theory of Islam*, p. 3.

(individual members) cannot help but rise up and spread the word and the message of Islam throughout the entire world.[223]

It is probably not surprising that in examining the organizational features of twentieth century Islamist groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jamaat-I-Islami, certain scholars have remarked on the similarity between these movements and those of the totalitarian organizations of Europe during the same period. In the opinion of Charles Wendel, there is "little question that Hasan [al-Banna] was deeply impressed by the organization of the Nazi, Fascist, and Communist parties... "[224] Following the example of these organizations, there can be little doubt that many leading Islamists attempted to emulate these organizations through their own movements. For the Islamists, it had appeared that their European counterparts had been successful in demonstrating that only a well-disciplined group with its own leadership providing the proper 'moral' environment could create the conditions necessary for a truly revolutionary movement.[225] Consequently, the Islamists too sought a disciplined, obedient, and loyal mass following that would be able to achieve the desired results of fundamental revolutionary change.

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[223]. There are various verses within the Koran which allude to similar organic examples. In reference to the true Muslim the Koran states: "... they [the believer] are like the seed which puts forth its shoot and strengthens it, so that it rises stout and firm upon its stalk, delighting the sower." *The Koran*, 48:32. "Do you not see how God compares a good word to a good tree? Its root is firm and its branches are in the sky; it yields its fruit in every season by God's leave. God speaks in parables to men so that they may take heed. But an evil word is like an evil tree torn out of the earth and shorn of its roots." *The Koran*, 14:26-27. "Those that give their wealth for the cause of God can be compared to a grain of corn which brings forth seven ears, each bearing a hundred grains. God gives abundance to whom He will." *The Koran*, 2:261.

[224]. Charles Wendel, "Introduction" in Al Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan Al-Banna' (1906-1949)*, p. 5.

In terms of the Islamists' long-term strategy, as previously mentioned, it is clear that the crux of their strategy involves the creation of "an active revolutionary force, inciting *Jihad* to establish the Islamic order."[226] Such a revolutionary strategy is necessarily and intimately connected to the earlier notions of leadership, organization, and thus ideology itself. As will become more evident in Chapter 2 regarding political Islam's bases of social support, it is in fact its willingness to confront the regime - the status quo[227] - or perhaps more accurately its creation for such an end, which plays a key role in garnering support from the disaffected members of society. According to Saleem Qureshi:

> The strength of the ideology lies in its combination of revolutionary appeal to overthrow the incumbent 'repressive' regime and the promise of return to the comfort of tradition. The protagonists of this ideology are the deprived and the underprivileged who hope to be able to rule a future Muslim state.[228]

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[225]. Choueiri, "Theoretical Paradigms of Islamic Movements," p. 114.

[226]. Faksh, *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, p. 15.

[227]. Ibid., p. 17. Also see Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 225.

[228]. Saleem Qureshi, "Political Implications of Fundamentalist Islam," in *The Middle East at the Crossroads*, eds. Janice Gross Stein and David B. Dewitt (Oakville: Mosaic Press, 1983), p. 73. Also see Fischer who examines this issue in the context of Khomeini's revolutionary appeal. Fischer, "Imam Khomeini," p. 166.

The Islamic theorists examined here do not actually use the word 'revolution' in describing their own particular aims. Instead, they focus more on what they believe is the need to replace the current system which does not allow for the proper environment in which God's Laws are able to flourish.[229] In a more general sense, declarations are made requiring the need to establish a new type of man, a new culture, and consequently, the creation of a fundamentally new world order.[230] Sayyid Qutb summarizes this revolutionary position of the Islamists without actually stating that the Islamic movements' aims are 'revolutionary' per se.

> When the purpose is to abolish the existing system and to replace it with a new system which in its character, principles, and all its general and particular aspects, is different from the controlling *jahili* system, then it stands to reason that this new system should also come into the battlefield as an organized movement and viable group. It should come into the battlefield with a determination that its strategy, its social organization, and the relationship between its individuals should be firmer and more powerful than the existing *jahili* system.[231]

Therefore, while Qutb does not actually use the term 'revolution,' it is clear that revolutionary action is his aim. The truth of such a statement is given credence in the fact that comments like these would eventually cost Qutb his life at the hands of the Nasser regime.

In their desire for a strategy rooted in revolutionary action it is evident that all the Islamic thinkers examined here comprehend the necessary link between thought and action. This is no more clearly demonstrated than in the fact that each was not only a theorist, but also sought to practically manifest their beliefs into reality. In other words, theory and words can only advance one's position so far and it eventually becomes necessary to initiate action if one wishes to concretely acquire such goals. As Hegel understood: "Man can be satisfied only by action. Now, to act is to transform what is real. And to transform what is real is to negate the given."[232]

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[229]. Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb," p. 78.

[230]. Khurram Murad, "Introduction" in Mawdudi, *The Islamic Movement*, pp. 20, 38, and 39.

[231]. Qutb, *Milestones*, pp. 46-47.

Consequently, each Islamic writer examined here recognizes the importance of an active policy, and realizes that mere contemplation of philosophical or theological matters is insufficient in addressing the real ills that plague contemporary Muslim societies. This is the reason each one of these Islamists actually created or joined Islamic organizations that engaged in political activity designed to turn thought into action.[233] Mawdudi addresses this activist stance when he states:

> No human effort can succeed merely on the basis of pious wishes and good intentions, nor can success be achieved merely by invoking the aid of holy souls. It is necessary to take concrete, specific, and appropriate action: This is an established law of God.[234]

Qutb is equally adamant in the need for definitive and deliberate action when he utilizes the example of the Prophet to demonstrate that for Muhammad it was important that "faith [was] not hidden in intellects or books, but expressing itself in a dynamic movement, which changed conditions and events and the course of life."[235] Thus, in the case of Muhammad there was clearly "the understanding that instruction is for action."[236] Once more, in linking the aims of contemporary Islamic movements to the founder of Islam, Qutb demonstrates that thought and action, theory and practice, have always constituted two fundamental and interconnected components of the Islamic religion.

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[232]. Hegel as quoted in Ibrahim, "Discourse, Power, and Ideology in Modern Islamic Revivalist Thought," p. 283.

[233]. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 122.

[234]. Mawdudi, *The Islamic Movement*, p. 93.

However, it is important to understand that while an active policy is necessary in confronting the current regime, in terms of a long-term strategy, the first step must necessarily involve a program to educate, or perhaps more accurately, re-educate the masses in the true ways of Islam. This belief in the primacy of re-establishing the principles of Islam within the individual has been a cornerstone of the Islamic movement since Hasan al-Banna. In fact, al-Banna consistently argues that it is only through the education of the people and the reform of individual hearts and souls that the goal of an Islamic nation can be achieved.[237]

Mawdudi, Qutb, and Khomeini also feel that it is only through education and the restatement of Islam's basic message that the Islamists can hope to be successful in their creation of a truly Islamic state. In this sense, the Islamization of the individual and society is necessary before a direct assault can occur against the state.[238] Once more, Qutb demonstrates that the need to implant Islamic values in the hearts and minds of the people is based on Muhammad's own experiences. As will be more thoroughly examined in Chapter 4, the Islamists emphasize how during Muhammad's 'Meccan' phase he spent thirteen years indoctrinating his followers in the principles of Islam before attempting any type of direct action against the ruling powers of the period.[239] In relating this issue to contemporary times, Mawdudi states: "Hearts will be won before bodies are conquered."[240] Qutb concurs when he asserts: "Our aim is first to change ourselves so that we may later change the society."[241] As a result, it is clear that the first stage in the revolutionary process must involve a change in the consciousness of the average individual and consequently, the creation of a new Islamic consciousness.[242]

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[235]. Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 18.

[236]. Ibid., p. 18.

[237]. For some examples see Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 132, Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, pp. 15, 308, and Sana Abed-Kotob, "The Accomodationists Speak: Goals and Strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27 (1995): 321-339, p. 323.

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[238]. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 123.

[239]. See Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 131, and Shepard, "Islam as a 'System' in the Later Writings of Sayyid Qutb," p. 38.

[240]. Mawdudi, *The Islamic Movement*, p. 104.

[241]. Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 21.

[242]. While this type of consciousness bears similarities to Marxist arguments regarding the 'false consciousness' of the working class and Gramsci's usage of 'common sense' (see Chapter 3), for the Islamic writers such as Mawdudi and Qutb consciousness involves the need for one to emancipate him or her self from their 'secular' surroundings and become more aware of God, and their duty towards him. Perhaps "God consciousness" or the term Mawdudi uses "*taqwa*" is a more accurate description. See Mawdudi, *The Islamic Movement*, pp.

While education is important in the spreading of the Islamic message, such teachings also have a more practical purpose. It is also important to instruct the followers of Islam in the true ways of their enemies and to use this education to expose the evilness of the regime and the surrounding *jahiliyyah* society. While all of the Islamists examined here had clearly designated opponents,[243] Qutb spends the most time appraising his enemy and developing the steps necessary for its destruction. In his attempts 'to know thy enemy' and study its powers there is the realization that to understand its fundamental strengths and weaknesses must be the first requirement. Consequently, while Qutb rejects the values and practices of the current hegemon, he realizes that only a complete understanding of its foundations will allow the Islamists to confront its power. According to Qutb, this confrontation will not only involve force, but will also be rooted in the Islamists' ability to refute the regime's arguments and expose its shortcomings.[244] Qutb is clear on the importance of learning the intricate details of the current *jahiliyyah* society when he asserts:

> [A] Muslim can study all the opinions and thoughts of *jahili* writers, not from the point of view of constructing his own beliefs and concepts, but for the purpose of knowing the deviations adopted by *Jahiliyyah* so that he may know how to correct these man-made deviations in the light of the true Islamic belief and rebut them according to the sound

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116-118, and Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, p. 44.

[243]. For al-Banna it was primarily the British, for Mawdudi the 'secular' Muslim regime in Pakistan, and Khomeini the American-backed Shah.

[244]. Ismael and Ismael, *Government and Politics in Islam*, p. 113.

> principles of Islamic teachings.[245]

In studying the strengths and weaknesses of his opponent Qutb realizes that any revolutionary process will necessarily involve a protracted struggle. Qutb understands that the ruling hegemon has already possessed sufficient time to diffuse its power and authority throughout the state and society. Even in his earlier work, *Social Justice in Islam*, Qutb recognizes that

> the machinery of the state and of society, the foundations of life in all its aspects, the spiritual and intellectual background are so built up on specific bases that they are difficult to change without the application of vast energy over a long time.[246]

In *Milestones* Qutb makes even clearer reference to the fusion that the hegemon has been able to create between the state and civil society.

> It [the hegemon] always takes the form of a living movement in a society which has its own leadership, its own concepts, and values, and its own traditions, habits, and feelings. It is an organized society and there is close Cupertino between its individuals, and it is always ready and alive to defend its existence consciously or unconsciously. It crushes all elements which seem dangerous to its personality.[247]

By writing in universal generalizations Qutb never mentions specific countries or persons by name, but it is clear that he is specifically referring to his own situation in Egypt. Consequently, one of Qutb's key contributions to the cause of the Brotherhood in Egypt was his ability to demonstrate how Nasser had been able to create a fundamental structural change and establish a much closer link between the state and civil society than had previously existed in al-Banna's time.[248] In terms of Qutb's assessment on this ability of the Nasserist State to dominate all facets of society, Choueiri states:

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[245]. Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 110.

[246]. Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, p. 241.

[247]. Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 46.

> The military created, or made use of a wide variety of networks in order to establish its hegemonic position in society at large. These networks, represented by a uniform educational system, bureaucratic machines, and the mass media, as well as mosques, and other religious institutions, allowed it to establish its own preconceptual frame of reference and rules by deploying a steady flow of inoculation. Culture and the economy were being moulded in a modern crucible of post-Islamic engineering.[249]

Through his astute recognition of the intricate web that the Nasserist regime had woven throughout the state and civil society, Qutb understood that the road to power would not be sudden. Instead, Qutb realizes that any strategy must necessarily involve a gradual infiltration of civil society and the winning over of the hearts and souls of the people before any direct assault on state power will be possible.[250]

After the masses have been educated in the principles of Islam and familiarized with their enemy in the struggle, the next step involves the active creation (i.e., separation) of two dialectically opposed forces. It is imperative that these two blocs be both total in their opposition and universal in their confrontation.[251] It is at this point that Sayyid Qutb and his unique utilization of the concept *jahiliyyah* assumes a central position in the long-term strategies of contemporary Islamic fundamentalist movements.

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[248]. Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 55.

[249]. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, pp. 79-80.

[250]. Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 16.

[251]. Gramsci concurs with this view when he states that "a theory is 'revolutionary' precisely to the extent that it is an element of conscious separation and distinction into two camps and is a peak inaccessible to the enemy camp... The philosophy of praxis has no need of support from alien sources." Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 462. This quote - encompassing the ideas of total separation and complete independence from the current hegemon - demonstrates a striking similarity to Qutb's modern use of the

One of the clearest distinctions between Sayyid Qutb and the other Islamic theorists presented above is the degree to which Qutb proposes a dialectical opposition between the revolutionary Islamic movement and the ruling 'pagan' secular elites. According to Qutb, an Islamic movement that desires to replace the current regime must present its movement in terms of a counter-ideology or counter-discourse to the dominant power.[252] Consequently, this Islamic organization must constitute an organic whole able to surpass its rivals ideologically and structurally.[253] In terms of creating this movement in complete and total opposition to the current socio-political order, Emmanuel Sivan is the most succinct.

> The counter-society must be capable of being self-enclosed in order to avoid fragmentation or abdication. It must prevent alien influences from penetrating it, yet remain sufficiently open and aggressive to draw from the outside whatever it cannot produce. It must pursue the dream of ultimately becoming a majority. It struggles to demolish the old society while at the same time hoping to become heir to that society. Radical destruction on the one hand preservation for the sake of new order on the other.[254]

As a result, Muslims must consciously separate themselves from the current social order, while at the same time attempting to destroy it entirely.[255] Since, as Qutb argues, "Islam is in

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concept *'jahiliyyah'* in the contemporary revolutionary process.

[252]. See Ayubi, *Political Islam*, pp. 123-124 and 140.

[253]. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 135.

[254]. Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 85.

[255]. Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb," p. 89. Some Islamic movements such as *Al-*

itself a completely independent system which has no connection with these others,"[256] this separation is made all the easier because, as demonstrated above, Islam can provide all the solutions to the contemporary problems afflicting Muslim societies.

It was his conceptualization of the Islamic movement as a counter-hegemonic force to the ruling powers - the Nasserist regime - that constitutes Qutb's most original contribution to the contemporary Islamist debate. This involves his very unique utilization of the term *jahiliyyah*. As stated previously, *jahiliyyah* literally means 'the land of ignorance' or more specifically refers to Arabia before the time of the Prophet Muhammad when Arabia was a land of pagans and idol-worshippers.

However, in its utilization as an instrument in the 'fundamentalist' struggle, Qutb eliminates its historical context and uses the term as a revolutionary device in describing all contemporary opponents of Islam.[257] Now *jahiliyyah* is to be used to refer to this other land, this land that does not recognize Islamic law nor bestow upon Islam

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Takfir wa al-Hijrah took this separation to its literal conclusion and attempted to physically separate themselves from what they deemed as pagan or *jahili* society. See Ismael and Ismael, *Government and Politics in Islam*, pp. 116-117. As for Kepel, he argues Qutb meant that any separation should be a mental withdrawal of true Muslims from those who have disregarded their creed and not an actual physical separation. See Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 64.

[256]. Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, p. 88.

[257]. Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 139.

the esteem it once held in the Golden Age of Islam.[258] Yet, as Yvonne Haddad points out "the difference between the historical *jahiliyyah* and the one prevailing today is that the latter is more sinister since it is created wilfully by men who usurp the role of God."[259]

In defining the *jahiliyyah* state of the present, Qutb criticizes numerous areas in which he feels the present state can no longer be considered a truly Islamic nation. In terms of specific policies, Qutb believes that contemporary society can not be regarded as Islamic when usury is the basis of economic exchange and devices such as the poor tax are not obligatory.[260] Yet, the principal means in determining whether a certain society can be deemed Islamic is if that society judges its citizens based on the revealed laws of *Allah* (i.e., The *Sharia*).[261] In other words, a given society can only be a truly Muslim community (*umma*) if the sovereignty of God (*hakimiyyah*) prevails over the pagan laws of men.[262] According to Qutb: "*Jahiliyyah* ... takes the form of claiming that the right to create values, to legislate rules of collective behaviour and to choose any way of life rests with men without regard to what God has prescribed."[263] By refusing to be governed by the word of God, contemporary *jahiliyyah* societies are instead ruled by the evil, corrupt, and pernicious ways of man. According to Qutb:

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[258]. The Golden Age of Islam is usually viewed as the period of Muhammad and the first Four Caliphs (632-661).

[259]. Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb," p. 85.

[260]. Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, p. 227.

[261]. Ibid., p. 227.

[262]. Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, pp. 50-51.

[263]. Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 12.

> [I]ts roots are human desires, which do not let people come out of their ignorance, and self importance, desires which are used in the interests of some persons or some classes or some nations or some races, which prevail over the demand for justice, truth, and goodness.[264]

Consequently, it is through this singular concept that Qutb is able to link intimately the key doctrinal aspects of political Islam - universalism, the omnipotence of God, and the calls for social justice - in demonstrating the necessity in carrying the word of God to all the peoples of the world.

In contrast to the other Islamic theorists examined here, it is clear that Qutb's notion of *jahiliyyah* is revolutionary and marks a notable departure in the doctrine of the Muslim Brotherhood.[265] However, the true uniqueness of his argument is rooted in the fact that since no state at that time was governed by the *Sharia*, the entire world had become for a true Muslim the abode of war or *jahiliyyah*. In other words, as long as neither the law of Islam nor the sovereignty of God was recognized within a defined territory, that territory became open to conquest by the forces of Islam.[266] As Qutb succinctly states on this point:

> [W]e may say that any society is a *jahili* society which does

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[264]. Ibid., p. 132.

[265]. According to Kepel: "Qutb's trans-historical use of the concept of *jahiliyya* marks a notable new departure in Muslim Brotherhood dogma. Al-Banna, for example, never dreamed of accusing the Egyptian society of his day of being non-Islamic." Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 46.

[266]. Choueiri, "Theoretical Paradigms of Islamic Movements," p. 115.

> not dedicate itself to submission to God alone, in its beliefs and ideas, in its observances of worship, and in its legal regulations. According to this definition, all the societies existing in the world today are jahili.[267]

It is through Qutb's use of the term *jahiliyyah*, and Islam's claims of totality and universal applicability, that modern political Islam has been able to acquire a status not unlike early Bolshevism and Trotsky's arguments supporting 'Permanent Revolution.' Like Trotsky's conceptions of communism, Qutb conceives Islam as a revolutionary ideology aimed at destroying all other ideologies and schemes of life and replacing them with one universally applicable doctrine. Consequently, though Qutb's dispute was primarily with the oppressive means of the Nasser regime in Egypt and his audience national in scope - like Trotsky in Russia - the explicit universality of Islam forced this confrontation out beyond Egypt's borders, thus entailing a global struggle between Islam and all other 'pagan' ways of life. According to Choueiri:

> Polytheists, hypocrites, the Jews, Christians, secular rulers, communist states, and capitalist systems, have all conspired one after another to undermine the foundations of Islam. This universal law of confrontation between Islam and all other systems of thought and social organization springs from the fact that two diametrically opposed camps cannot coexist peacefully in the same society.[268]

For Qutb, this clear-cut division of the world into two confrontational camps or adversaries forms the core of both his thinking and his strategy. Since he argues Islam is both universal and total, it follows that: "In the world there is only one Party of God, all others are parties of Satan and rebellion."[269] In this sense, the lines are drawn and there can be no middle ground.[270] As a revolutionary ideology with a messianic message the strategy of Islam is clear. As the most perfect way of life - as God's way of life - it is only appropriate that the truth of Islam be spread throughout the world for all to enjoy.

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[267]. Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 80.

[268]. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 94.

Finally, one cannot examine contemporary Islamic strategy without an investigation of the term *'Jihad.'* It seems that of all the concepts associated with contemporary Islamists *'Jihad'* (Holy War or Holy Struggle) remains the most notorious and the most divisive. It has been argued in this chapter that the fundamentalists share essentially the same beliefs. However, in reference to the concept of *jihad*, the precise form in which to conceptualize this term has led to most of the divisions between the so-called 'moderate' and 'radical' camps within Islamic movements throughout the Middle East.[271] In other words, should jihad simply be for defensive reasons or is offensive *jihad* acceptable? And if it is acceptable, are all targets legitimate? In its simplest form, it can be asserted that the principal reason for the differing interpretations of *jihad* is that specific Koranic verses are often quite contradictory in their meaning, with both defensive and offensive *jihad* promulgated.[272]

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[269]. Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 117.

[270]. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 128.

[271]. As will become clear when the Islamic group Hamas is examined in Chapter 5, perhaps no other single factor has been as divisive for contemporary Islamists than the use of *'Jihad'* in the current struggle against both the Israelis and the PLO.

Clearly, Hasan al-Banna, as the most 'moderate' of the Islamic theorists examined here, assumes the position that *jihad* should be utilized primarily for defensive reasons to protect Muslims against foreign invaders, such as the British and the Zionists in Palestine.[273] Al-Banna would certainly never have advocated violence against his own people. In this context of *jihad* for 'defensive' reasons only, al-Banna states:

> As for other people whom we do not yet share this bond, we will be at peace with them as long as they refrain from aggression against us... As for those of them who show hostility toward us, we shall repel their aggression by the most virtuous means through which such hostility may be repelled.[274]

It is clear that in declaring jihad only as a means of protection and self defense, al-Banna is focusing on Koranic verses such as: "Fight for the sake of God those that fight against you but do not attack them first. God does not like the aggressor."[275]

With regards to the 'rules of *jihad*' and its legitimate targets, al-Banna would clearly distance himself from the later works of Mawdudi and Qutb, and would condemn certain strategies employed by contemporary fundamentalists, such as suicide bombings and the killing of unarmed civilians. According to Banna:

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[272] For a better understanding of the origins of the term *'Jihad,'* see Chapter 4 "Muhammad and His Times." Briefly, the argument put forth there is that as the Islamic movement under Muhammad gained strength *jihad* evolved from a means of self-defense into an offensive strategy. Finally, when total war was embarked upon by Muhammad and his followers against the idolaters of Arabia, *jihad* then become a duty incumbent on all Muslims. It became the sixth pillar of Islam. Consequently, these different usages of the concept of *'Jihad'* account for much of the discrepancies within contemporary Islamic circles.

[273] Al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan Al-Banna' (1906-1949)*, p. 133.

[274] Ibid., p. 56.

[275] *The Koran*, 2:190. Other examples in the Koran include 2:193 and 22:39.

> For when they [Muslims] fight, they do not instigate hostilities, nor do they behave licentiously, nor do they mutilate, nor do they steal or plunder property, nor do they commit rape, nor do they indulge in wanton destruction... So also it is forbidden to slay women, children, and old men, and to despatch the wounded, or to disturb monks and hermits, and the peaceful who offer no resistance.[276]

It is evident that many contemporary 'radical' fundamentalists do not share this view.

However, as opposed to al-Banna, later Islamic thinkers such as Mawdudi are proponents of a more offensive-oriented strategy of jihad that would appear almost indiscriminate in its targeting. Mawdudi believes that both offensive and defensive *jihad* is permissible if it means replacing the domination of man over man with a system in which God's sovereignty could reign supreme.[277] Since Mawdudi believes this was the context in which God had originally accorded his message to Muhammad, he argues that the essential meaning of *jihad* has not changed with the passage of time.[278] As is true in the case of al-Banna's interpretation of *jihad*, there are also several verses in the Koran that support this more offensive position as Muhammad eventually found himself in a state of near 'perpetual warfare' with the hypocrites, Jews, and his Meccan neighbours. Two of the more significant verses which justify this interpretation of *jihad* are: "Make war on them until idolatry shall cease and God's religion shall reign supreme."[279] "When the sacred months are over slay the idolaters wherever you find them. Arrest them, besiege them, and lie in ambush for them."[280]

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[276]. Al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan al-Banna' (1906-1949)*, p. 154.

[277]. Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 70.

[278]. Abbott, *Islam and Pakistan*, p. 177.

However, while al-Banna and Mawdudi may have disagreed on certain elements of *jihad* in the contemporary world all the Islamists agree that *jihad* must be placed at the forefront of a Muslim's religious obligations.[281] Therefore, *jihad* must become in essence a duty incumbent on all Muslims,[282] which is why some refer to *jihad* as the 'sixth pillar of Islam.' With regards to *jihad* as a duty, Mawdudi rhetorically asks: "Again, consider why it is that such importance is given to *jihad* that the Quran condemns as hypocrites those who evade it?"[283] There is no doubt, that in later revelations of the Koran, *jihad* is elevated to the plateau of a duty incumbent on all the followers of the young movement still fighting for its very survival. As the Koran asserts: "God has given those that fight with their goods and their persons a higher rank than those that stay at home. God has promised all a good reward: but far richer is the recompense of those who fight for Him."[284] As a consequence of changing circumstances, to be a faithful Muslim is no longer sufficient and martyrdom in the name of God receives the highest blessing in His eyes. With reference to martyrdom, the Koran states:

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[279]. *The Koran*, 8:90

[280]. Ibid., 9:5

[281]. This does not mean al-Banna justifies offensive *jihad*, but that a Muslim must be willing to fight to defend his religion. According to al-Banna: "God has imposed *jihad* as a religious duty on every Muslim ... from which there is neither evasion nor escape... He regards abstention and evasion of *jihad* as one of the major sins..." Al-Banna, *Five Tracts of Hasan Al-Banna' (1906-1949)*, p. 133. Also see Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 137, and Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*, p. 61.

[282]. It is important to understand that *jihad* does not necessarily mean military conflict. According to Abbott, *jihad* has two parts "one connotating striving one's utmost and one connotating armed conflict." Abbott, *Islam and Pakistan*, p. 177. Choueiri adds that *jihad* is a spiritual and financial endeavour as much as a military enterprise. Choueiri, "The Political Discourse of Contemporary Islamist Movements," p. 31.

[283]. Mawdudi, *The Islamic Movement*, p. 79.

> Never think that those who were slain in the cause of God are dead. They are alive and well provided for by their Lord. Pleased with his gifts and rejoicing that those they left behind, who have not yet joined them, have nothing to fear or to regret. Rejoicing in God's grace and bounty. God will not deny the faithful their reward.[285]

When one reads this passage it is no surprise that so many young Iranians went willingly to the killing fields that were the marshy swamps of southern Iraq.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has had two principal objectives. The first was to provide a short biography of the four primary Islamic theorists in an attempt to contextualize the particularities of their lives and the influences that impacted on their theoretical works and their practical attempts at organizing Islamic movements. As will be examined in Chapter 3, Gramsci was aware of the fundamental relationship that existed between theory and practice, between thought and action. By examining some of the details of the life of each ideologue it was demonstrated how each sought not just to put forth coherent ideologies, but ideologies of movement, which had as their primary objective the ability to practically motivate and influence individuals toward a specific goal: the seizure of political power.

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[284]. *The Koran,* 4:95.

[285]. Ibid., 3:169.

The second objective of this chapter was to present a unified core of Islamic political doctrine as established by these four principal Islamic ideologues. In this sense, the argument has been put forth that taken together their writings represent a common ideological worldview, not unlike that presented by other 'political' ideologies, such as communism and liberalism.[286] There are five principal elements of contemporary Islamic political thought. The first is the belief in the sovereignty of God (*hakimiyyah*) and the dominance of God in all human affairs, including political relations between individuals. The second is the need for a type of social justice couched in socialist terms of equality, freedom, and brotherhood, but essentially concerned with ending man's oppression of his fellow man. Third, is the belief in the universality and totality of Islam and its ability to provide all the solutions necessary in addressing contemporary human problems. Fourth, they all assume a strident anti-Western stance and the view that the West is a declining civilization and little more than a decadent and hedonistic society. Finally, all the core Islamic theorists examined here share a similar position regarding important components of the revolutionary process, such as the need for strong leadership, a unified organization, and a long-term strategy of *jihad*. Consequently, it is the ability of these theorists to provide a coherent ideology and doctrine of beliefs, which will be shown to be the fundamental first stage in creating a truly counter-hegemonic force that has as its ultimate objective the overthrow of the existing political, economic, and social order, and the creation of a genuine and authentic Islamic state.

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[286]. See Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 122.

CHAPTER II: THE BASIS OF ISLAMIST SUPPORT

In the last chapter, Islamic political ideology and the core beliefs of Islamic doctrine as developed by the principal Islamic theorists of the twentieth century were examined. In this chapter, the focus will be on the factors that account for the increase in support accorded the Islamists over the past couple of decades. First, a brief survey of contemporary Muslim societies will be conducted. At the macro, or systemic level, these societies exhibit certain common features associated with the recent phenomenon of modern capitalist development. Some important consequences of advanced modernization have included greater urbanization, higher levels of education, and a perceived increase in material deprivation. This, in turn, has impacted at the micro level on subjective perceptions and evaluations towards the system as a whole, leading to increased feelings of alienation, frustration, and marginalization. Clearly, there are specific socio-economic groups within contemporary Muslim societies who have been more detrimentally affected by these recent developments. Consequently, it will be argued that what ultimately unites these sometimes very different individuals into a common cause and support for the Islamists is their shared animosity towards a state or regime they believe to be primarily responsible for their grievances. Since the state or regime dominates all aspects of the political, economic, and social process - and forbids any opposition to, and criticism of, its rule - the state then becomes the sole target of those dissatisfied groups frustrated with what they judge as a corrupt, incompetent, and oppressive regime. In fact, since its beginnings, Islam has been seized upon by those groups seeking to restructure the current socio-political order as an ideology of protest and an instrument of revolt.

FACTORS BEHIND SUPPORT

The argument developed in this chapter is that contemporary Islamic fundamentalist movements must be viewed primarily as modern social movements whose success is rooted in their ability to mobilize the population towards a concrete goal. Therefore, while Islamists may espouse their message within a religious or moral context, their support is predicated upon the particular socio-economic context of that society.[1] In other words, many of those individuals who support the Islamists do so not necessarily for religious reasons, but because they desire a radical restructuring of the current order, a change it is believed can only be provided by contemporary Islamic movements. Even in the one case where an Islamic revolution was successful, Khomeini succeeded because he created a flexible political movement which identified with individual socioeconomic grievances, and not because he embarked upon a religious crusade obsessed with theological dogma.[2] Therefore, while Khomeini's message is viewed in the West as primarily that of a religious demagogue, he was, in fact, more interested in expressing the socio-economic grievances and hopes of his followers.

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[1] In this sense, Faksh asserts: "Islamism is basically an indigenous response to prevalent socioeconomic and political problems." Faksh, *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, p. xii. Also see Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 125.

At the macro, or systemic level, there are a number of common features shared by the principal Muslim states that have greatly contributed to the growth of political Islam.[3] In its most rudimentary sense, these difficulties can be linked to the process of modernization or rapid capitalist development currently being experienced throughout the Muslim world. Therefore, many people who favour the Islamists' calls for a restructuring or overthrow of the current political, economic, and social structure are stimulated in part by the side-effects of capitalist development, such as increased migration to urban centres and the acquisition of higher education. Consequently, they are both a product of industrialization and urbanization, and have become increasingly frustrated by what they perceive as the constrained nature of contemporary capitalist development within their own specific countries. Hence, in their view, capitalist development has not only led to greater social and cultural dislocation,[4] but rapid modernization has failed to fulfil the promise of increased employment and status. In her overall analysis of contemporary Muslim societies, Nazih Ayubi states:

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[2]. Abrahamian, *Khomeinism*, p. 3.

[3]. It should be pointed out that while many of the authors cited here use Egypt as their standard case study - because it is the most populous Arab country and the growth of radical Islamic movements have played a key role in its development in the post 1967 era - Egypt's 'modernization crisis' is seen as symptomatic of developments occurring throughout the Middle East. For some examples see Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, Ayubi, *Political Islam*, Sivan, *Radical Islam*, Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, and Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*.

> One of the characteristics of late, uneven, and dependent capitalist development is that the rates of growth in urbanisation, education, and bureaucratization are never matched by similar rates of growth in industrialization.[5]

Consequently, as rapid capitalist development has universally demonstrated, the side effects of concentrated industrialization can be catastrophic and "can provoke violent reactions and regressions."[6]

One of the most important consequences of rapid capitalist development has been increased urbanization over the past two decades. As populations throughout the Muslim world have grown substantially and the land available to sustain rural populations continues to shrink, many more people have moved to the city in search of employment and the promises of a better future. Oliver Roy estimates that the entrance of millions of peasants into the city "tripled the population of the great Muslim metropolises from 1970-1990."[7] Consequently, in these new cramped conditions where more and more people are crowded into smaller spaces and where basic services - water, sewers, transportation - are either lacking or non-existent, many people have grown increasingly disenchanted with a system which does not seem to properly attend to their growing needs.

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[4]. In fact, Ayubi asserts that contemporary Islamic movements should be seen primarily as "the moralist/culturalist expression of a developmental crisis..." Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 158 For other examples, see Qureshi, "Political Implications of Fundamentalist Islam," p. 76, and Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 125.

[5]. Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 171.

[6]. Daryush Shayegan, *Cultural Schizophrenia: Islamic Societies Confronting the West* (London: Saqi, 1992), p. 84. One of the crucial points this study attempts to make by using Gramsci as a framework to explain the phenomenon of Islamic 'fundamentalism' is the similarity between the European communist/socialist movements at the turn of the century and contemporary Islamic movements. Both arose in response to rapid capitalist development in which there were clear winners and losers and an ever-widening gap in the distribution of wealth. Like those revolutionary movements of Europe, the Islamists aim to overthrow the current 'unjust' system and create a 'more equitable' distribution of economic and political resources.

In addition, increased levels of education without a corresponding growth in the number and quality of employment is another systemic level cause accounting for the growth of political Islam throughout the Muslim world. Many young Muslims attempting to find their way out of their current state of poverty and underemployment have sought higher education as a means to an end. With great sacrifice to themselves (hard work) and great sacrifice to their parents (financially) recent graduates have become increasingly frustrated by their inability to find the type of jobs they believe their new educational skills, and hence status, deserve. Consequently, many recent university graduates - not just those with general Arts degrees, but those with Science degrees, engineers, and doctors[8] - along with their parents, have become very receptive to the Islamists' promises of overthrowing the current order and replacing it with a more 'just' system where merit, not just nepotism and wealth, determine employment opportunities.

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[7]. Olivier Roy (Translated by Carol Volk), *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 55. In Tehran alone, Roy states the population has grown from 3 to 9 million over this period.

[8]. As will be clearly demonstrated in Chapter 5, many of the individuals who most enthusiastically support Hamas and other Islamic groups in Palestine are among the most educated - university lecturers, doctors, engineers.

A third consequence of rapid capitalist development is what can be termed a general feeling of material deprivation experienced by an ever-expanding proportion of the population. On the one hand, while rapid capitalist development creates noticeable economic benefits to large segments of the population they are often conceived in terms of their negative social and cultural repercussions.[9] On the other hand, modernization and the growth of urban centres have actually led to increased feelings of material deprivation and disadvantage as many individuals have become more acutely aware of the promises of consumptionism and their corresponding inability to participate in the purchase of primarily 'Western' goods. This realization that there is a growing consumer society in which they cannot participate makes the West a primary target of their animosity - something the Islamists willingly exploit. In this sense, Sivan argues that Islamic fundamentalism

> is a reaction against a modernity that does not deliver even on its material promises. It creates a gap - or cognitive dissonance if you will - between Western-style consumerist expectations and "Fourth World" production and per capita

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[9] According to Mohammed Arkoun: "The progress in public health, free schooling (but not education), security, transportation, and domestic comfort cannot compensate for the damage to the person caused by the destruction of ecological, sociological, and agrarian structures in which ancestral values confirmed and sacralized by Islam were rooted." Mohammed Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers* (Boulder: Westview, 1994), p. 91.

income.[10]

In the end, in terms of the overall phenomenon of rapid capitalist development being currently experienced by many Muslim nations, perhaps Nazih Ayubi is the most astute when she argues that

> these movements have emerged not really as an expression of moral outrage against a modernisation that was going "too fast," but rather as a reaction to a developmental process that was not going fast enough.[11]

When one examines the micro or individual level, it is clear that subjective feelings, perceptions, and evaluations towards the current political, economic, and social order greatly determine whether a person regards the system as illegitimate, and hence, will support those groups proposing its overthrow. Clearly, most of those individuals who back the Islamists share certain feelings of frustration towards, and alienation from, the current socio-political structure. This 'frustration' can be rooted in several areas, such as unemployment, a lack of adequate housing,[12] cultural ambiguity or a loss of identity.[13] Alternatively, a sense of 'alienation' can arise from an unresponsive government and a growing lack of political participation.[14] These feelings of

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[10] Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 11. Roy makes a similar point in suggesting what the Islamic movements are really offering "the oppressed (*mustadafin*) of all countries is the dream of access to the world of development and consumption from which they feel excluded." Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. 52.

[11] Ayubi, *Political Islam*, pp. 176-177.

[12] Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, pp. 15-16.

[13] Qureshi, "Political Implications of Fundamentalist Islam," p. 77.

[14] Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 15.

frustration and alienation lead the individual to experience a general sense of marginalization at the hands of the regime and deprivation in relation to the wealthier segments of society.[15] In other words, these feelings derive from an individual's belief that he or she is increasingly powerless in contemporary society, with little or no say over the daily affairs of one's life.

In addition, systemic transformations occurring in contemporary society - urbanization, increased education, and relative material deprivation - have created rising, but unfulfilled expectations, leading to the disenfranchisement of many individuals within Muslim societies undergoing rapid change. A number of authors identify rising expectations and the subsequent frustrations and anxieties created when the promises offered through modernization remain unfulfilled as an important contributor to the Islamists' success. It is therefore not surprising that Islamic movements acquire a significant portion of their support from individuals who believe that they form part of the 'declining social stratum' of society.[16] For Nazih Ayubi, the cause of this support for the Islamists is directly related to the growing frustrations caused by contemporary systemic changes - especially increased education and urbanization - in the Muslim world.

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[15]. For examples see Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 125, Anderson, "Fulfilling Prophecies," p. 28, and Qureshi, "Political Implications of Fundamentalist Islam," p. 73.

[16]. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 10.

> In a nutshell it can be argued that while the middle strata have been expanding in size and in proportion in most Arab societies, their rising expectations (stimulated in part by the acquisition of higher education and by the move to urban centres) are being severely frustrated because of the constrained nature of economic development in these societies.[17]

In her conclusion, Ayubi is even more succinct regarding the circumstances that have contributed to the rise of contemporary Islamist movements. According to Ayubi: "These are precisely the conditions of raised, but then frustrated, expectations."[18]

Gilles Kepel concurs with Ayubi regarding the state of contemporary capitalist Muslim society and its negative impact on individual satisfaction, especially in terms of an increased sense of powerlessness. Hence, it is the individual's 'loss of reference points' and 'loss of identity' in a rapidly changing world, that is the primary factor in garnering support for the Islamic cause.[19] Saleem Qureshi also examines this question of powerlessness when he states: "The uprooted are often those psychologically least able to cope with the unknown and the strange, and the dislocation often results in alienation and loss of identity."[20]

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[17]. Ayubi, *Political Islam*, pp. 159-160. Emmanuel Sivan makes a similar point in arguing for the role played by 'rising expectations,' especially among the educated youth. According to Sivan: "The greater the expectations, the deeper the fall to the abyss of despair when the hopes failed to materialize." Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 125.

[18]. Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 175.

[19]. Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 217.

[20]. Qureshi, "Political Implications of Fundamentalist Islam," p. 77. Also see Sivan, *Radical Islam*, pp. 119-120; Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 217; and Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 168.

It is not surprising that two of the Islamists' principal bases of support - the young and recent migrants to the city[21] - have been drawn to the message of political Islam. In a difficult and sometimes lonely existence, it is the Islamists who have assisted these individuals in their daily struggles. On the one hand, the Islamists have provided significant support through their establishment of a network of social services which the state either refuses to, or cannot provide.[22] On the other hand, the conservative-oriented social message of political Islam and its focus on traditional values in a rapidly changing world has been an important factor in providing comfort, and hence, increasing the legitimacy of the Islamists in the eyes of the masses. In other words, according to Esposito, the Islamists have garnered success by creating a degree of security and sense of community in an ever changing and confusing world.

> Many swept along in a sea of alienation and marginalization found an anchor in religion. Islam offered a sense of identity, fraternity, and cultural values that offset the psychological dislocation and cultural threat of their new environment.[23]

Consequently, the Islamic movements have been able "to give meaning and direction to the process of rapid and irreversible change in which we are all involved."[24]

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[21] The actual social bases of the Islamists' support will be examined more clearly in the next section.

[22] Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 17. As will be demonstrated in the case of the Islamists in Palestine, the ability of the Muslim Brotherhood, and subsequently Hamas, to provide much needed services in a number of areas - health, education, and financial - has been crucial in increasing their support in the Occupied Territories. (See Chapter 5).

[23] Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 16.

In the end, the common feature exhibited by those individuals that tend to support the Islamists' platform is the perception they share of themselves as the victims or 'losers' in the contemporary development of capitalism. In other words, they see themselves as having been the most detrimentally affected by the recent process of modernization, and its corresponding impact of rapid and dramatic social and economic change. Whether these feelings are caused by the crowded conditions and anonymity of increased urbanization, the frustrations created by 'wasted' educational opportunities, or the material deprivation of a consumer society of which they are a part, but cannot participate, individual frustration and resentment draw them to the one group that promises them a new beginning and a new system. Consequently, it is for these reasons that many people seemingly trapped in this inescapable environment of poverty and hopelessness believe that only 'political' Islam offers them a just and credible solution to their daily problems.

SOCIAL BASES OF SUPPORT

Most authors agree that contemporary Islamic 'fundamentalist' movements receive the majority of their backing from four principal socio-economic groups. These four main bases of support are the state-employed petit bourgeoisie (i.e., civil servants), the under-employed intelligentsia, large numbers of young - especially students - and finally, recent rural migrants to the city. In other words, the Islamic movements acquire the bulk of their support from members of the ever-expanding middle and lower-middle urban classes.[25]

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[24] Albert Hourani, "Conclusion," in *Islam in the Political Process*, ed. James P. Piscatori (Cambridge; New York: Royal Institute Of International Affairs, 1983), p. 226.

It may be surprising that one of the core supporters of the contemporary Islamic movements in their battle to dismantle the state is civil servants, since this group derives its very living from wages received from the state. Yet, for many of the most educated frustrated by their seeming inability to make sufficient advancement in life, the civil service may be the only option for employment. The active support of civil servants has been a prominent feature of the Islamist movement throughout this century. The civil service played an instrumental part in the initial success achieved by Hasan al-Banna and the Egyptian Brotherhood in the late 1920s and early 1930s. This was especially true during its period of rapid growth from 1932-1945.[26] The civil service still remains a fertile area of recruitment for the Islamist groups and continues to form one of their core constituents.[27]

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[25]. In general, Richard Mitchell describes these groups as the 'urban middle class,' Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 329, while Kepel refers to them as the 'poor urban masses,' Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 177.

[26]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, pp. 12-13. Also see Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt*, p. 158.

[27]. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 12. Also see Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 161.

The second segment of Muslim society that is especially overrepresented regarding its support of, and membership in, contemporary Islamic fundamentalist movements, is the under-employed - and perceived as under-paid - intelligentsia. This group includes specific professions such as university professors and teachers, in addition to those under the more general designation of intellectuals, poets, and artists. As is the case with civil servants, the intelligentsia have long supported the Islamic movements, constituting both a key component of the organizations' base and even actively assisting the early Brotherhood in disseminating their 'Islamic' message to the masses.[28] Intellectuals, professionals, and teachers have continued to constitute a principal component of the Islamists' following over the last decade.[29] More specifically, in his analysis of the Iranian revolution, Abrahamian shows how Khomeini deliberately sought the support of the intellectuals in legitimizing his movement to the masses. In fact, teachers and intellectuals, along with students, were among the first groups to actively protest against the Shah's regime.[30]

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[28]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, pp. 283-284.

[29]. For some examples see Lisa Anderson, "Fulfilling Prophecies: State Policy and Islamist Radicalism," in *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform*, ed. John L. Esposito (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1997), p. 23, Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 10, and Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 12. As will be examined in Chapter 5, intellectuals (university instructors, engineers, and other professionals) still represent an essential core of Hamas' social base, constituting what Gramsci would term their "organic intellectuals."

[30]. Abrahamian, *Khomeinism*, p. 53.

The third group that has demonstrated a stronger than normal tendency to support the Islamists is the younger segments of the Muslim population (i.e., those under 25). Many of them tend to be students, as demonstrated in the case of Iran, and therefore have acquired some level of higher education. As was true of both state employees/civil servants and intellectuals, students formed a key component of the Brotherhood's support base prior to the 1952 Revolution.[31] This remains the case as certain scholars argue that the twin variables of youth and education determine to a great extent the likelihood that a specific individual will support an Islamic movement.[32]

It is probably not surprising that support among the younger segments of the population is higher, since younger people in general tend to be more radical and seem more willing to take extremist positions than their elders. As a result, they have demonstrated a greater readiness to support the type of radical Islamic movement that has developed throughout the Middle East - especially in Egypt - in the post 1967 era. For Ismael and Ismael, an examination of the Islamic Liberation Organization (*Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Islami*) confirms this fact.[33] Established in Egypt in the wake of the 1967 War by leader Dr. Siriyya "members of the Islamic Liberation Organization were primarily young (median age 22), students or recent graduates (professionals), from lower or lower-middle class (often rural) backgrounds."[34] Other authors concur with this view regarding the younger generation's proclivity towards the fundamentalist movements based on a variety of factors.[35]

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[31]. See Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, pp. 12-13, and P.J. Vatikiotis, *The History of Egypt* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), p. 440.

[32]. In fact, Kepel argues that education - even higher education - is more, not less likely to lead an individual into supporting radical Islamic movements. Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 217. For some other examples see Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 12, Mortimer, *Faith and Power*, pp. 403-404, and Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 161. These points were of course examined in some detail in the previous section.

The final socio-economic group which has demonstrated a greater willingness to support the positions of the political Islamists is the recent rural migrants who have left the countryside to live and work in the city. As previously examined, it is not surprising that this group - which tends to be underemployed and estranged in its new surroundings - has been especially receptive to the Islamist message of equality, justice and brotherhood being preached in the slums of many Arab cities. In fact, Michael Fischer argues that recent migrants to Iranian cities were crucial in the formation of the social bloc that supported Khomeini in his overthrow of the Shah.[36]

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[33]. The *Munazzamat al-Tahrir al-Islami* is probably best known for its 1974 seizure of a Technical Academy in Northern Egypt. It was hoped that such a brazen attack would spark a general uprising among the Egyptian masses.

[34]. Ismael and Ismael, *Government and Politics in Islam*, p. 114.

[35]. For some examples see Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 138. Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 126.

[36]. Fischer, "Imam Khomeini," 162.

UNITY THROUGH OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNING REGIME

In Chapter 1, at the theoretical level, it was examined how the various Islamic ideologues had constructed a core of beliefs or a unified political ideology meant to attract the masses to the cause of political Islam. In this section, it is now necessary to demonstrate, in a practical sense, why very different individuals and groups coalesce in supporting Islamic movements in their confrontation against the state. Consequently, it will be argued that those groups that tend to favour the Islamists do so less because of what the Islamists propose - the installation of an authentic Islamic state - and more based on what the Islamists actually oppose - the current ruling elites and their perceived domination over all facets of contemporary society.[37]

It is this 'unity through opposition' that allows all those groups disenchanted with the current regime to coalesce around the Islamists. The Islamists have capitalized on the fact that they have been able to portray themselves as an authentic alternative to corrupt, inefficient, and sometimes repressive regimes.[38] Consequently, those segments of society that exhibit the strongest animosity towards current Muslim regimes, as examined in the first two sections, tend to coalesce around the Islamists. In terms of this support Nazih Ayubi states:

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[37]. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 189. It must be added that Islamic fundamentalism is not unique in this regards. Whether one examines the Communist movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, or the fascist parties of the 1920s and 1930s, most radical organizations garner most of their support based on their critiques of the current regime, not because these groups necessarily provide a detailed program of concrete policies.

[38]. John L. Esposito, "Introduction," in *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?* ed. John L. Esposito (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1997), p. 3.

> Within this 'loose coalition' there is little doubt that the virtually proletarianized members of the state-employed petite bourgeoisie, the under-employed intelligentsia, and the larger student population are the main sponsors of the most militant of the Islamic tendencies that have now as their sole objective the defeating of the state and the dismantling of the current social order on which it is premised.[39]

Therefore, it is primarily this opposition to the state that aids the Islamists in consolidating their support on a practical level, unifying different individuals and varying groups around one ultimate objective: the overthrow of the ruling regime. According to Nazih Ayubi:

> A wide variety of groups are attracted to the Islamist thesis because ... [it] imparts a certain sense of intimacy and assurance, and because they also share with the militants a certain degree of antagonism towards the existing social order and the state that keeps it in place. The Islamic language therefore most fundamentally represents *a broad alternative system of meaning and power to the hegemonic system represented by the existing social-political order which inevitably marginalizes and/or alienates certain individuals and certain social groups*. To an extent, the details of the Islamic thesis become less important than the fact that it is a very different thesis from that advocated by the State.[40]

In contemporary Muslim states, it is probably not surprising that the regimes in power have become the primary target of frustration for the middle and lower-middle classes. The fact remains that most of these regimes are omnipotent, dominating all facets of the state and civil society. This, in turn, creates the impression that the current regime, either through corruption, mismanagement, or incompetence, is solely to blame for all the contemporary problems being inflicted on these disaffected groups. Consequently, it is the Islamic opposition, because it is better organized, more efficient at providing alternative services, and represents an indigenous belief system, that allows the Islamists to outperform the secular opposition and become the only practical alternative to the current ruling elite.[41] When the case of Khomeini was examined above it was demonstrated that much of the 'fundamentalists' success was based on these very factors and the charismatic leadership of Khomeini, not necessarily on a desire to see an implementation of the *Sharia* and an Islamic state. In the end, it was a common opposition to the Shah and the alternative 'revolutionary' perspective offered by the Islamists that eventually brought them victory over their more secular opponents.

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[39]. Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 161.

[40]. Ibid., p. 175. As will be examined in Chapter 3, Ayubi's view corresponds very closely to the Gramscian conception of a counter-hegemonic bloc. (Emphasis added - TJB).

It is clear that throughout the Middle East these regimes and their monopolized power bases have left them vulnerable to attack by citizens dissatisfied with their totalitarian rule. This, in turn, has led directly to the growth of Islamic fundamentalist movements which act as 'catch-all' receptors for the entire spectrum of individuals and groups which believe the Islamists offer the best opportunity of defeating the current hegemon. In pursuing this line of exploration, first, specific policy areas will be examined in which the current regimes have been perceived as inadequately addressing the concerns of the bulk of their citizens, especially the middle and lower-middle classes. This includes the view among certain groups that the current ruling elites have created an environment of political stagnation, economic decline, and cultural and social deterioration. Second, in a more general sense, the state will be examined with regard to the perception that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In other words, the state is perceived in the classic sense as a hegemon, monopolizing and controlling all state institutions, government policy, and facets of civil society. Consequently, not only do these regimes tend to dominate the entire economic and political processes of these countries, but they have successfully controlled the intellectual content, and thus have eliminated all debate, criticism, and opposition to its rule.

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[41] Anderson, "Fulfilling Prophecies," p. 24. It should be added that there is one further reason that allows the Islamists - as opposed to the secular opposition - the greatest opportunity in challenging the power of the regime. This important difference involves the fact that Islamic groups throughout the Muslim World have had the benefit of using the mosque as a staging ground for organizing their movement and disseminating both their religious and 'political' message to their followers. Thus, the mosque offers a unique opportunity to criticize the government and ruling regime, while remaining effectively beyond the control of the state (i.e., a type of sanctuary from governmental repression). The mosque has demonstrated its effectiveness in this context - as an organizer of anti-government dissent - in countries throughout the Middle East, such as Egypt, Iran, Algeria, and Palestine. Gilles Kepel provides a good example of how the mosque has been utilized in the Islamists' struggle in Egypt. See Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, Chapter 6 "The Sermons of Sheikh Kishk."

When examining the specific policies pursued by the ruling elites in the various Middle Eastern states it is clear that much of the hostility directed against these regimes is based on the perception of incompetence and mismanagement on the part of the ruling powers and their failure to address the real problems affecting the majority of their populations. In this sense, the ruling elites are perceived as having created an atmosphere of political stagnation, through their inability to live up to the expectations they themselves created for their own people.[42] Furthermore, this failure to deliver the 'political' goods leads to the impression that the regime and its representatives are corrupt, distant, and inefficient.[43] The fact that in many states the same party has ruled uninterrupted for several decades - the FLN in Algeria, the NDP in Egypt, the Ba'ath parties in Iraq and Syria, etc. - contributes to this view of the regime and the ruling party as being overly bureaucratized and bloated, where nepotism not merit is the primary requirement for advancement.[44] Thus, for many members of the middle class the regime is perceived as nothing more than ineffectual centres of political patronage for party hacks through which the government cannot even provide the most basic of services. In turn, it is the Islamists, despite their extremely limited resources, which have superseded the state as the main provider of these benefits.

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[42]. Mary-Jane Deeb, "Militant Islam and the Politics of Redemption," *The Annals of the American Academy 524* (November 1992): 52-65, p. 53.

[43]. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 185, and Qureshi, "The Political Implications of Fundamentalist Islam," p. 73.

[44]. Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, p. 52.

However, it is these regimes' unwillingness to permit any 'legitimate' opposition to the ruling party's monopolistic control over the political process that has contributed most significantly to the perception of stagnation, and hence, the general radicalization of politics. With "the omnipotent control of the authoritarian one-party nation-state"[45] the norm in the Middle East, all opposition to the ruling party has been coopted, dissuaded, or at worst, severely repressed. Clearly, most of the regimes of the Middle East have demonstrated an unwillingness to accept or tolerate even moderate opposition to their rule. In certain cases, as in Egypt and Algeria, where governments have attempted to actively repress opposition movements, the opposition usually replies in kind. History has quite clearly demonstrated that violence begets violence, and repression leads to more extreme, radical, and violent responses on the part of the opposition.[46]

Economic policy is a second area in which the ruling elites of many Muslim nations are perceived as having inadequately addressed the concerns of their citizens through accusations of blatant economic mismanagement. In a general sense, the alleged failure of most Muslim governments to respond

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[45]. Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam*, p. 114. Also see Faksh, *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, p. 33.

[46]. Anderson, "Fulfilling Prophecies," p. 19. Also see Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 187, Hourani, "Conclusion," p. 234, and Zubaida, *Islam, the People, and the State*, p. 157.

adequately to the economic needs of their societies remains the biggest threat to their continued rule.[47] This is not to suggest that all segments of society have equally suffered from the economic policies pursued by Muslim leaders over the past couple of decades. The fact that many members of the upper echelons of Muslim society have become quite wealthy, accentuating and polarizing the gap between the have and have-nots, only contributes to the perception among the masses that the current system is corrupt and therefore must be overthrown. As Qureshi argues: "The industrialization and economic reforms that have been instituted ... have tended to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, if not in absolute terms then in relative terms."[48]

In the specific case of Egypt, one of the principal factors accounting for the growth of Islamic 'fundamentalism' has been a greater perception of 'relative deprivation' among the masses. The economic policies pursued by Anwar Sadat in the 1970s, including his *'infitah'* or open door policy to foreign investment, led to a definite polarization of Egyptian society along economic lines. While there was an absolute growth in the wealth of society as a whole, there was a definite segment of society - usually those close to the President - who did much better in relation to the general population. As a consequence, many of the 'have nots' are now willing to examine more radical options (i.e., political Islam) in an attempt to extract a more equitable distribution of wealth from the nation.[49]

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[47]. Abdulwahab Saleh Babeair, "Intellectual Currents in Contemporary Islam," *The Muslim World* 81, no.3 (1991): 231-244, p. 234.

[48]. Qureshi, "The Political Implications of Fundamentalist Islam," p. 77. Also making this argument are Deeb, "Militant Islam, and the Politics of Redemption," p. 53, Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 15, Faksh, *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, p. 28, and Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 11.

The third specific area of policy over which current Muslim regimes have been criticized may, in fact, be the most significant for those groups that oppose the state. It involves the perception among a large segment of the population that the regime is directly responsible for the cultural and social deterioration currently plaguing Muslim society. In fact, it is on the level of social dislocation that the Islamic movements has been the most effective in putting forth their more traditionally-oriented message. According to Sidahmed and Ehteshami:

> At the societal level conditions were conducive to the growth of Islamist forces. Social dislocation resulting from accompanying economic "development," rapid urbanization, destruction of traditional institutions, expansion of education, and social mobility had resulted in the growth of deep social tensions and discontent.[50]

As previously observed in terms of the specific groups that back the Islamists and the factors behind this support, the ability of the Islamists to articulate the fears of the masses and to provide understanding and security in a rapidly changing world has been a crucial factor in their success.

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[49]. See Ismael and Ismael, *Government and Politics in Islam*, pp. 105-107.

[50]. Sidahmed and Ehteshami, "Introduction," p. 7.

In examining this perceived deterioration of the cultural and social environment it is clear that the Islamists see the source of the problem as rooted in two interrelated causes. One factor is the growing influence of western culture and its increased role within contemporary Muslim society. The second and related belief is that the leaders of these Muslim countries themselves have abandoned and corrupted the true spirit of Islam and now simply pay lip service to this sacred religion for their own, and their regime's, selfish interests.

The belief that the Muslim world is being polluted and even threatened by the materialistic and godless ways of the West was extensively examined in Chapter 1. In fact, the extent to which the various Islamic ideologues share this common perception of the West helps establish this as one of the core doctrinal beliefs of political Islam. To the Islamists, this cultural invasion of the region by western culture and values has created an environment in which the Islamists have been able to portray themselves as the only group able to save traditional Islamic society from cultural annexation by the West.[51]

Yet, the Islamists argue that a second and more deadly assault is now being perpetrated upon traditional Muslim societies. This threat though is not being waged by an external foe, but instead originates from within, from the newly 'westernized' elites ruling contemporary Muslim states.

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[51]. Deeb, "Militant Islam, and the Politics of Redemption," p. 54-55.

According to the Islamists, these elites have undergone a metamorphosis, blindly imitating the Western world in both its material orientation and belief system.[52] In areas such as life-style, dress, sexual mores, and in the media, Western customs and values are perceived as locked in a continuous onslaught upon a more traditional-oriented Muslim way of life.[53]

Of course, it should be remembered that this view of the ruling elite within the Muslim world is not new. In fact, the birth of the Muslim Brotherhood was predicated on the belief that only a traditional movement such as the Brethren could prevent the continued secularization and pro-British tendencies of the ruling elites.[54] Even during the upheaval that followed the coup by the Egyptian Free Officers in 1952, in the opinion of the Muslim Brotherhood, the violence of the early 1950s was a symptom of the larger battle being waged for the hearts and souls of the Egyptian masses between the secular and Western practices of the elites and the traditional and Islamic values of the Brotherhood.[55]

The Islamists' relentless attacks on contemporary leaders are not only rooted in their perceived adoption of Western modes of behaviour and thought, but also on the fact that the ruling elites refuse to conduct their personal affairs or the affairs of the state in a purely Islamic manner.[56] By refusing to allow Islamic doctrine to rule over Western imported ideas and beliefs, while at the same time purporting to be truly religious in outward appearance (e.g., participating in the mosque prayer services on fridays), the leaders are accused of simply paying 'lip service' to Islam.[57] Consequently, this has led to a denunciation of certain Muslim leaders as being either lackeys of the foreign powers - like the Shah of Iran or Sadat - or, even worse, as being blatantly anti-Islamic.[58] In the opinion of the Islamists, by encouraging the secular and materialist invasion of the West and by claiming false adherence to Islam, modern Muslim leaders have not only failed the Muslim masses, but are responsible for the cultural imperialism currently being perpetrated by the West against the Muslim world.

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[52]. For some examples see Qureshi, "The Political Implications of Fundamentalist Islam," p. 77, Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 135, and in what Sivan terms "Westoxicated", Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 183.

[53]. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat*, p. 138.

[54]. Harris, *Nationalism and Revolution in Egypt*, p. 15.

[55]. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*, p. 318.

However, it is clear that the Islamists do not simply oppose specific governmental policies, but instead, more generally refute the regime's tendency to dominate over all aspects of the state and civil society. In other words, it is the regime's 'hegemonic' control over all aspects of the state and societal institutions, as well as the policy-making process itself, that helps to solidify the opposition in their desire to see the overthrow of this current political order.[59] As observed by Faksh: "The reality of current Arab-Muslim politics is best characterized as hegemonic, closed state structures superimposed on emasculated societies."[60] It is not surprising that those groups that feel most excluded and detrimentally affected by the current political, economic, and social order - the 'declining' middle class - would therefore take the lead role in trying to overthrow this structure.[61]

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[56]. Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 145.

[57]. Deeb, "Militant Islam, and the Politics of Redemption," p. 54.

[58]. Qureshi, "The Political Implications of Fundamentalist Islam," p. 77.

However, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 3 when Gramsci's 'theory of hegemony' is more closely examined, the ability of a state or regime to monopolize control over institutions such as the army, or to retain a firm grip over public policy, is less significant than its ability to dominate both the content of education and the environment of intellectual development. As a result, power and domination are sought through controlling not only what people do, but more importantly, how people think. Clearly, the ability of the Nasserist state to control not just civil society but even the social sphere - "family, education, and the use of spare time"[62] - enabled it to both tighten its grasp on society, while also eclipsing the role of the Islamic establishment in what were once considered strictly religious domains.[63] In this fashion, the regime was able to use religion as a tool of social integration, legitimacy and acceptance for its own policies and views, while at the same time increasing its hegemonic control over society.[64]

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[59]. The notion of hegemony will be examined more thoroughly in Chapter 3 in reference to Gramsci's conception of the term and its contemporary relevance.

[60]. Faksh, *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, p. 33. Also see Choueiri who speaks of "the overwhelming power of the state and its hegemonic monopoly of the political and economic process." Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 71.

[61]. See Ayubi, *Political Islam*, pp. 140 and 175.

It is not surprising that several of the principal contemporary writers who focus on this question of 'hegemony' in the context of the Middle East specifically refer to the case of Egypt under Nasser - and to a lesser extent his predecessors - as the ideal type. As was demonstrated in the last chapter when examining the works of Sayyid Qutb, he was acutely aware of Nasser's success at having created a hegemonic regime in the newly independent state of Egypt. In the classic sense, Qutb elucidated on how Nasser had been able to expand the hegemonic power of his regime and seemingly penetrate all facets of the state and civil society.[65] Thus, while the nationalist regime under Nasser was able to plant its roots deep in the army and other government institutions,[66] its real success was based on its ability to acquire the explicit support of the masses and to mobilize civil society from top to bottom.[67] As a consequence, regardless of the Brotherhood's accusations to the contrary, the Nasser regime was recognized as legitimate and the masses were willing to identify with its policies and the ideology of the government.[68]

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[62]. Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 82.

[63]. Ibid., p. 82.

[64]. Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 100. Also see Hourani, "Conclusion," p. 230.

[65]. As discussed in Chapter 1. See Qutb, *Milestones*, p. 46.

[66]. Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*, pp. 11-12.

It has been this ability of the Egyptian regime to retain hegemonic control, not only through certain 'coercive' means, but more importantly, through its ability to coopt the educational system and the religious establishment that has continued to garner the regime popular legitimacy.[69] In Nasser's case, it granted him the opportunity to shape "the consciousness of the succeeding generations of Egyptians."[70] In other words, it allowed him to create a new 'common sense' view of the world, which in reality, reflected the interests of his own regime.[71] Clearly, control of the educational system remains a cornerstone of the National Democratic

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[67]. Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 26.

[68]. Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*, p. 54.

[69]. The ability of the Egyptian regime to exert its mandate over both the practical policies of the state and the doctrinal or moral beliefs of its people continues to form the core of its hegemonic control over both state and society. Consequently, it is this duality of 'coercion or consent' that has permitted the regime to both retain and expand its power. This concept - 'coercion and consent' - and its relevance towards hegemonic control will be examined more closely in terms of Gramscian methodology. (See Chapter 5).

[70]. Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*, pp. 11-12.

[71]. For a more thorough explanation of the concept of 'common sense' and its importance in asserting hegemonic control, see Gramsci's use of the term in Chapter 3.

Party's strategy in retaining control in Egypt.[72]

In addition, the ability of the Egyptian state to assert its dominance over the religious establishment has helped to cement the regime's position within society at large. In Egypt, the *ulema*, or religious scholars, are in essence civil servants, with their wages procured by the state. In exchange for a decent salary and greater influence on state radio and in the media, the *ulema* have been willing to back the regime and support the State's official line on religious matters.[73] As a result, the religious hierarchy (*ulema*) have been coopted by the regime, assimilated, and turned into a pillar of the status quo powers.[74]

The last aspect to consider when examining the state and its creation of an active hegemonic force, is the larger question of political ideology. In other words, have these regimes given their people a larger ideological context in which to live their lives? For example, in the West, the notions regarding a liberal, capitalist democracy are the fundamental principles that have been used to mask inequalities and specific cases of blatant political, economic, and social injustice.

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[72]. Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 99.

[73]. See Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*, p. 20, Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 54, and Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 100.

[74]. It is interesting that Ibrahim writes of the *Ulema* in the Gramscian sense as 'traditional intellectuals' assimilated and conquered by Nasser, and, in effect, performing the role of the 'organic intellectuals' for the new regime. See Ibrahim, "Discourse, Power, and Ideology in Modern Islamic Revivalist Thought," p. 294. Many of these aspects will be discussed in Chapter 3.

However, in the Muslim world, the biggest threat confronting the current ruling elite appears to be the fact that they have failed to espouse a greater ideological meaning for the masses, or perhaps more accurately, their ideologies have emerged as bankrupt, meaningless, and essentially void. As a result, the ruling regimes have as much failed as the Islamic movements have succeeded in promulgating a more effective ideology by which to guide the lives of their followers. Hence, it is in this political and ideological vacuum created by the bankruptcy of current ideologies that the Islamists have been offered their greatest opportunity. For, if nothing else, the Islamists have presented the masses with the chance to believe in something beyond the naked exertion of power, namely a belief in equality, social justice, and brotherhood (see Chapter 1).

At this point, it should be pointed out that the failure of the dominant ideologies of various Middle Eastern regimes did not suffer a long and slow dissolution. Instead, it is clear that there was one definitive and cataclysmic event that signalled the bankrupt nature of the dominant ideas of nationalism, socialism, and Pan-Arabism that had arose throughout the Middle East in the two decades following the Second World War. Without question this event was the Six-Day War, in which Israel was able to effectively crush the combined armies of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan.[75] As a result of the profound shock and disillusionment caused by the June War, large numbers of people suddenly became less willing to follow the belief systems these regimes were promoting. Not surprisingly, the reaction felt in Egypt - the most populous and seemingly powerful of the Arab states - was symptomatic of the response felt throughout the Muslim world.[76]

Almost overnight the ideology of national socialism, as practised and promoted by the Nasser regime, became meaningless in the eyes of the masses. Conversely, it has been the ability of political Islam to fill this vacuum which has helped contribute to its success in the post 1967 environment. On the one hand, the growth of Islam can be viewed from strictly a religious perspective. It is probably not surprising that in difficult times when there is a questioning of faith, religion is often used as a comfort against the harsh realities of the external world. However, the movement towards religion was seen to represent, not just a comfort for the present, but also a punishment for the sins of the past. As Mortimer argues:

> In the eyes of many the defeat was a just punishment on the regime, and indeed on the nation as a whole, for the hypocrisy, for the neglect of the Sharia, the whoring after false Gods and foreign ideologies, which characterized the whole of the preceding period.[77]

As the Jews poured into the old city of Jerusalem in June 1967 there was the belief that the Jews had been successful because they had been "truer to their religion than the Arabs had been to theirs."[78]

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[75]. Sivan, *Radical Islam*, pp. 47 and 131.

[76]. Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*, p. 4.

[77]. Mortimer, *Faith and Power*, p. 285.

On the other hand, with the ideology of the contemporary regime discredited and the creation of a political and ideological vacuum, the growing belief in Islam and the need for Muslims to return to their roots became widespread. As a result, Islam could now aspire to be more than just a faith, it could strive to be a complete way of life.[79] In other words, Islam was now capable of becoming a political ideology, capable of easing the souls of the disheartened and disillusioned, while also attempting to fill the political vacuum created by the failures of the current regime.[80]

Clearly, it was the young upon whom the disaster of 1967 had the greatest effect, and consequently, it was the young who were most willing to find meaning in the ideas and practices of Islam.[81] It was in this environment that the new radical Islamic movements sprouting throughout the Middle East - based primarily on the Qutbian discourse - were able to capture many of the members of the younger generations and, in the process, consciously aim to fill the "ideological and political vacuum" created by the failures of the Nasserist state.[82] To many of the young, "the 1967 defeat had only demonstrated more conclusively the rottenness of the whole political and social order."[83]

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[78]. Ibid., p. 286.

[79]. Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 131.

[80]. Gramsci would refer to this juncture as the moment at which the superstructure (economic) and superstructure (ideas) have become detached allowing the most opportune time for potential challenges to current hegemonic supremacy. Yet, while the ruling ideas of national socialism were no longer relevant, in the case of Egypt, no counter-hegemonic force had been sufficiently diffused throughout society to directly challenge the 'domination' (military, economic) of the Nasser regime at that time. For more explanation see Chapter 3.

[81]. Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 47.

In the final analysis, in the opinion of many Arabs, the last thirty years have only more sharply demonstrated that the regimes throughout the region remain ideologically bankrupt, certain of only one goal - their desire to continue their control of power. Moreover, the unwillingness of these contemporary regimes to permit even a moderate degree of political opposition reinforces the view among a large segment of the population that in the Muslim world today a significant ideological vacuum remains. Consequently, if one desires a true alternative to the current system, only the Islamists appear ideologically, organizationally, and administratively able to fill this void.[84]

In terms of this ability of the Islamists, as opposed to any other group, to fill this political and ideological vacuum created by the inadequacies of the ruling powers, As'ad AbuKhalil succinctly states:

> Since the 1970s, Islam has emerged as the one political ideology that has not been tried and exhausted. Its distance

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[82]. Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 142.

[83]. Mortimer, *Faith and Power*, p. 288.

[84]. Faksh, *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, pp. 34-35.

> from the actual political process represents its greatest advantage at a time when all ruling ideologies are perceived as bankrupt.[85]

It is because of its uncontaminated nature and its ability to unify the very diverse groups that, above all else, seek the overthrow and destruction of the current political and social order, that political Islam continues to represent the biggest single threat confronting the contemporary regimes of the Middle East.

ISLAM: AN IDEOLOGY OF PROTEST AND A TOOL OF REVOLT

In its most rudimentary sense, political Islam should be seen as primarily an ideology of protest. Thus, political Islam is the beacon around which all those groups most detrimentally affected by the current political, social, and economic order converge in their denunciation of the current regime. While the Islamists may incorporate the symbolism and rhetoric of religion, their real concerns are social, economic, and most importantly, political. In other words, it is power and control that they desire most.[86] R. Hrair Dekmejian concurs with this view of Islam as essentially an ideology of protest.

> No less significant has been the role of Islamic fundamentalism as an ideology of protest against arbitrary rule and socioeconomic injustice. In the absence of other institutional and ideological channels of opposition, fundamentalism has provided a religiously sanctioned means for the articulation of popular dissatisfaction.[87]

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[85]. AbuKhalil, "The Incoherence of Islamic Fundamentalism," p. 677.

[86]. Faksh, *The Future of Islam in the Middle East*, p. 23.

[87]. Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution*, p. 176.

In fact, this contemporary view of Islam as a vehicle for political protest is not without precedent. Throughout the history of Islam, it has been utilized for reasons of political justification by both leaders, in legitimizing their rule, or by revolutionaries, to denounce it.[88] Clearly, Islam's popularity, and the recurring themes of social justice, equality, and the ending of man's domination over his fellow man, have given Islam the opportunity to synthesize its role as both a political ideology and a vehicle of political protest.[89] Hence, one only needs to examine the earliest history of the infant Muslim state to observe Islam being used as an ideology aimed at restoring what was believed to be the true doctrine of the faith, while at the same time working to overthrow the existing political order. According to Dekmejian:

> [P]resent-day Islamist societies emulate the pattern of early insurrectionary groups by using politicized Islam as an ideology of protest against ruling elites who are charged with deviating from the true faith. Indeed beginning with the Kharijites and the Shiites, fundamentalism became the ideology of opposition against those in power.[90]

Of course, the use of Islam as an ideology of protest and as an instrument of revolt did not develop in a vacuum. Instead, its utilization for such purposes has its antecedents in both the practices and theory of the Muslim world. As mentioned above, the Kharijites,[91] mainly because of their "relatively harsher ecological-social background,"[92] turned to Islam and religious doctrine to achieve primarily political aims.

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[88]. See Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 165, and Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 62.

[89]. Qureshi, "The Political Implications of Fundamentalist Islam," p.79.

[90]. Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution*, p. 38.

Theoretically, the contemporary 'fundamentalists' had a much more difficult time finding historical justification for their revolutionary doctrine since Sunni political theory clearly assumed the position that "even an unjust ruler was better than strife and the dissolution of society."[93] This is where the works of Ibn Tamiyya (1260-1327) were used to justify the overthrow of a ruler based on his noncompliance with the *Sharia*.[94] In other words, "a Sunni ruler becomes illegitimate if he does not apply a substantial part of the

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[91]. The Kharijites were the first major sect to break from mainstream Islam. This occurred during the period of the Caliph Ali (657-661). Primarily consisting of economically alienated and marginalized segments of the population they argued that those who did not follow the literal word of God as expressed in the Koran should be excommunicated from the community. A Kharijite would eventually assassinate Ali in 661 for his perceived 'deviations.' In examining the current phenomenon of Islamic 'fundamentalism' several authors draw comparisons between the Kharijites and the contemporary Islamists. For some examples see Ayubi, *Political Islam*, pp. 4 and 125, Mortimer, *Faith and Power*, p. 62, Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 58, and Ajami, "In the Pharaoh's Shadow," p. 27. In fact, the Kharijite epithet was hurled at Qutb and some of his co-conspirators during the trials of the Brotherhood in Egypt in 1965-66. See Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 107.

[92]. Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 125.

[93]. Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 19.

[94]. Ibn Tamiyya lived during the period of the Mongols' capture of the Muslim Caliphate in Baghdad. He was persuaded to declare a *fatwa* instructing jihad against the Mongol prince who was governing according to Mongol tradition at the exclusion of the Sharia. Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, p. 194. Also see Ismael and Ismael, *Government and Politics in Islam*, p. 19, and Ayubi, *Political Islam*, p. 33.

Sharia."[95] It was these arguments that were seized upon by Sayyid Qutb and others, such as Abd al-Salam Faraj (leader of the *Al Jihad Group* which assassinated Sadat), in their justification of a Sunni-style revolutionary doctrine with its roots in Islamic political thought.[96] The contemporary Islamists now had the legitimacy they sought in justifying the overthrow of current leaders who refuse to rule in the shadow of the *Sharia*. As an instrument of revolt, contemporary Islamists can argue that they are simply fighting the same non-Islamic and 'foreign' rulers who have consistently plagued the history of an otherwise perfect religion.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the principal factors accounting for the growth in contemporary 'fundamentalist' movements' support and the various social groups that have tended to back the Islamists. The argument advanced in this chapter has been that though the Islamists present their message in religious and moral terms, they are primarily broad social movements. Therefore, both the specific policies conducted by contemporary regimes and these governments' total domination of the state and civil society have contributed in unifying those groups most detrimentally affected by the current environment (i.e., the casualties of modernization) into

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[95]. Sivan, *Radical Islam*, p. 99.

[96]. Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, pp. 193-194, and Sivan, *Radical Islam*, pp. 104 and 190.

supporting what they perceive as the only legitimate alternative to this hegemonic control. Thus, it is this 'unity in opposition' that has thrust the Islamists to the forefront of the current political struggle. With its historical roots as an ideology of protest and instrument of revolt, Islam has an advantage over other movements which seek the overthrow of the current political order. Consequently, Islam is perceived as the only legitimate option available to those disadvantaged segments who genuinely believe that there must be a better way.

CHAPTER III: GRAMSCI:

AN ACTIVE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

The works of Antonio Gramsci have been studied in depth over the last fifty years in various attempts to extrapolate his true worth to the study of political science. Whether in terms of his Marxist strain, ideal liberalism, or historicism, Gramsci's writings have been utilized by theorists and practitioners on all sides of the political debate. Such Gramscian terms as 'hegemony,' 'war of position,' 'historic bloc,' and 'organic intellectuals' have been used by political scientists in such diverse areas as international relations[1] and Canadian politics.[2]

For many observers, using Antonio Gramsci's works as a theoretical framework to conceptualize Islamic 'fundamentalism' may initially appear odd. Yet, this chapter hopes to demonstrate that far from being alien to, or misplaced with, political Islam, Gramsci's writings provide a concrete framework through which the phenomenon of political Islam can more adequately be understood. Consequently, the society that Gramsci was analysing and the revolutionary forces he was conceptualizing for his own time - in early 20th century Italy - exhibit characteristics similar to those found in contemporary Muslim states and societies. In both cases, with increased modernity, capitalist development, and minimalist political participation, economic wants are transformed into political demands. Since these demands are rooted in common conceptions of human dignity they are in a sense universal, similarly shared by all individuals. Inevitably, these desires create conditions and circumstances which demand action by the many in their hope of becoming one of the few - the new class of elites. This is a development that can only be achieved through their overthrow of the current socio-economic order.

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[1] For examples see Robert W. Cox, *Production, Power, and World Order: social forces in the making of history* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987) and Stephen Gill, *American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[2] Trevor Harrison, *Of Passionate Intensity: Right-Wing Populism and the Reform Party of Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1993).

In reference to political Islam, the key function Gramsci's works perform in terms of conceptualizing the contemporary role of Islamic movements is through their ability to create 'a guide to revolutionary action,' by situating and constructing the proper environment through which revolutionary action can occur. Gramsci's works assist in providing a framework for revolutionary action both through his conceptualization of society and state and in his overriding aim to construct a counter-hegemonic force. By analysing the configuration of forces one must confront, and the proper use of ideology, organization, and a long-term strategy, Gramsci's writings are most effective in conceptualizing the type of revolutionary process currently sought by Islamist movements throughout the Middle East.

Several important Gramsci scholars recognize this 'revolutionary' characteristic of Gramsci's work as his most prominent contribution. A.B. Davidson states that "the object of his [Gramsci's] writings was to provide a guide to revolutionary action in the conditions in which the passage from bourgeois world to the socialist world takes place."[3] In the view of other Gramsci scholars, the writings through which he either creates or develops various fundamental concepts have their most significant impact in how they advance his central theme of constructing an active revolutionary force. Joseph Femia emphasizes this idea in relation to his concept of 'hegemony:' "Gramsci's concept of hegemony furnishes the pivotal point for an enterprise which manages to combine a complex, multidimensional analysis of social order with a novel and provocative theory of revolution."[4] Anne Showstack Sassoon assumes a similar stance when she states: "[Gramsci] implies a view of revolution as a process in which the outcome is determined not in a single dramatic moment but by the whole of the party's activities..."[5] Therefore, whether this guide to revolutionary action is rooted in the construction of a long-term strategy based on an organized and ideologically coherent party as Showstack Sassoon claims, the conceptualization of society and state as interpreted by

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[3]. A.B. Davidson, "The Varying Seasons of Gramscian Studies," *Political Studies* 20, no.4 (December 1972): 448-461, p. 452.

[4]. Joseph Femia, "Hegemony and Consciousness in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci," *Political Studies* 23, no.1 (March 1975): 29-48, p. 48.

[5]. Anne Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, 2nd Ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 103.

Femia, or the end result stressed by Davidson, it is clear that, for Gramsci, the overriding objective in the construction of such a revolutionary force is to overthrow the current ruling elites and to gain political power.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SOCIETY AND THE STATE:

THE LAYERS OF SOCIETY

Throughout Gramsci's multi-layered analysis of society he attempts to arrive at a more concise understanding of the different elements of society which are, in turn, necessary to construct his counter-hegemonic bloc. By proceeding from the concept of human nature, through the individual, to what he refers to as 'collective man,' Gramsci remains focused on this overall goal. Essential to his conceptualization of society and societal actors is the clear attempt to demonstrate that each member of society is fundamentally influenced by the ruling 'Hegemon.' In most cases, this influence is felt unconsciously (i.e., 'common sense'). In fact, for Gramsci, it is this lack of consciousness that is the root cause in preventing individuals from breaching the 'common sense' world of the hegemon. Therefore, it is only after this break is complete that each individual can proceed to accept the new or alternative culture of the counter-hegemon. This, in turn, becomes the necessary first stage in the construction of Gramsci's revolutionary movement.

The foundations of Gramsci's analysis of society, and societal relations, are rooted in his concept of 'human nature.' Throughout the history of philosophy the concept of 'human nature' has represented the standard point of origin for all philosophical conceptions of society, and hence, the individual's position within that society. In its most rudimentary and dichotomous form, the argument has proceeded from Thomas Hobbes' contention for the basically pessimistic view of human nature, while Rousseau argued for the essential 'goodness' of man.

Gramsci proceeds beyond this simple dichotomy by asserting that, in fact, human nature is neither inherently good nor evil, but instead is malleable and changes. In most cases, it is determined by the hegemon as part of a deliberate strategy to create a certain type of human nature. According to Gramsci:

> The basic innovation introduced by the philosophy of the praxis [Marxism] into the science of politics and history is the determination that there is no abstract human nature, fixed, and immutable ... but that human nature is the totality of historically determined social relations, hence an historical fact which can, within certain limits, be ascertained with methods of philosophy and criticism.[6]

Gramsci continues on this theme later in *The Prison Notebooks* when he refers to the ability of 'man' to change human nature, and thus, the ability of man to effectively intervene in the making of history.

> That human nature is the "complex of social relations" is the most satisfactory answer, because it includes the idea of becoming (man "becomes," he changes continuously with the changing of societal relations) and because it denies "Man

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[6]. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 133.

> in general."[7]

Therefore, while Gramsci does conceptualize 'human nature' in this fashion, he is always conscious of the larger implications of his analysis in terms of the ultimate objectives of the revolutionary movement.[8]

As one proceeds from the abstract notion of 'human nature' to the more concrete realities of the individual, the crucial role that Gramsci confers on the individual as the fundamental building block in the revolutionary process cannot be understated. As opposed to many of Gramsci's fellow Marxists who took an instrumental position towards the masses - as nothing more than a quantified number - Gramsci emphasizes the essential function each individual performs within a particular movement. Thus, each 'man' must be perceived as a philosopher,[9] able to change his surroundings by changing his conception of the world. According to Gramsci:

> Each man ... outside his professional activity, carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a philosopher, an artist, a man of taste, he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring

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[7] Ibid., p. 355.

[8] When examining Gramsci's work it is important to understand the precise context of his writings. Gramsci's aim was not to build a theory that espouses an absolute truth valid throughout the ages. Instead, it should be examined in reference to how it was intended, as a framework into which a critical analysis of the existing hegemon could be directed, while allowing opposition to the current regime to be constructed, based on the real problems confronting the disenchanted masses. For further explanation see Anne Showstack Sassoon, "Hegemony, War of Position, and Political Intervention," in *Approaches To Gramsci*, ed. Anne Showstack Sassoon (London: Writers and Readers, 1982), p. 107, Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, p. 220, and Luciano Pellicani, *Gramsci: An Alternative Communism?* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1981), p. 37.

[9] Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 347.

> into being new modes of thought.[10]

Consequently, for Gramsci, the individual is recognized not only as the essential foundation of any successful movement, but also as being able - through his own efforts and ideas - to bring about the impetus necessary to win the revolutionary struggle. As will be examined below, this view forms the cornerstone of Gramsci's fundamental belief in the need for the masses to assume an 'active' role in the revolutionary struggle.

In reference to the individual and his relationship to the dominant power or hegemon, Gramsci realizes that the first step towards the goal of conceiving a counter-hegemonic force is through a critical understanding of one's self. Consequently, for the individual, only critical self-awareness can create a true consciousness not determined and superimposed by the state. While a lack of consciousness formed a crucial component in Marx's theory (i.e., 'false consciousness'), Gramsci views consciousness less on a class basis and more in terms of the individual's lack of consciousness regarding his or her own 'true' self interest.

> Critical understanding of self takes place therefore through a struggle of political "hegemonies" of opposing directions, first in the ethical field and then in that of proper politics, in order to arrive at the working out at a higher level of one's own conception of reality. Consciousness of being part of a particular hegemonic force ... is the first stage towards a further progressive self-consciousness in which theory and practice will finally be one.[11]

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[10]. Ibid., p. 9.

[11]. Ibid., p. 333.

Therefore, Gramsci once more demonstrates that reaching a new level of consciousness is not sought in terms of some abstract goal. Instead, the aim is to create a legitimate counter-hegemonic force - in both deed and action - able to challenge the ruling power. For Gramsci realizes that no fundamental change is possible without first initiating a marked intellectual and moral revolution at the level of man's individual consciousness.[12]

In reference to the individual's own position within society, the question remains as to why there exists such a gap between "the dominant interpretation of reality and [one's own] objective situation,"[13] or as W.G. Runciman states, "the degree of deprivation subjectively perceived and objective inequality."[14] It is clear that this contradictory or false consciousness experienced by the lowest strata of society must have a principal source. In the view of Gramsci, the fundamental cause of this 'contradictory consciousness' is what he terms 'common sense.' According to Gramsci, 'common sense' can be understood as the unquestioned acceptance of the customs, morals, and beliefs of everyday society.[15]

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[12]. James Joll, *Gramsci* (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1977), p. 108. Gramsci himself uses the example of France prior to the French Revolution where concrete action was first preceded by revolutionary thought.

[13]. Femia, "Hegemony and Consciousness in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci," pp. 42-43.

[14]. W. G. Runciman quoted in Femia. Ibid., p. 45.

[15]. Thomas Nemeth, *Gramsci's Philosophy: A Critical Study,* (Brighton Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 75-76.

As Gramsci explains, if one is to construct a counter-hegemonic force it is imperative to uncover the root cause of this so-called primitive philosophy of 'common sense.' For Gramsci, the source is the ruling elite, who promote a certain conception of 'common sense' to prevent the masses from realizing their true consciousness, and hence, their own fundamental interests.[16] Therefore, the common sense ideas of the hegemon - used to acquire the 'consent' of the masses in their rule - are really nothing more than the narrow and selfish interests of the elites superimposed on the general interests of the masses. As a result, the masses come to accept the morality, the customs, and the institutionalized rules of behaviour promoted throughout society as absolute truths that cannot or should not be questioned.[17] According to Nemeth:

> [T]he bourgeoisie first leads us to think that there is a fixed, eternal realm of truth, then that we have some truths today, particularly about the economic system and the class division of society.[18]

In response to these supposed 'universal truths' Gramsci argues that 'common sense' is neither a universal given nor an unquestionable truth. Instead, Gramsci argues "that common sense is an ambiguous, contradictory, and multiform concept, and that to refer to common sense as a conformation of truth is nonsense."[19] Gramsci realizes that only by debunking the supposedly 'universal truths' contained within 'common sense' can the individual aspire to the next stage of development. It is at this juncture that the blind acceptance of 'common sense' and the lack of individual consciousness become intimately intertwined.[20] Gramsci expresses this contention in his initial criticism of Bukharin's work *The Popular Manual*. According to Gramsci:

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[16]. Walter L. Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 149.

[17]. Giuseppe Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci: Life of a Revolutionary* (Translated by Tom Nairn) (London: New Left Books, 1970), p. 238.

[18]. Nemeth, *Gramsci's Philosophy*, p. 134.

> *The Popular Manual* ... should have taken as its starting point a critical analysis of the philosophy of common sense, which is the "philosophy of the non-philosophers," or in the other words the conception of the world which is uncritically absorbed by the various social and cultural environments in which the moral individuality of the average man is developed.[21]

Once the uncritical acceptance of the 'societal norms' of the ruling elite is addressed, the need arises for the individual to transform his views beyond the narrowness of the common sense world imposed by the hegemon. In other words: "When an individual from the masses succeeds in criticizing and going beyond common sense, he by these very facts accepts a new philosophy."[22] According to Gramsci the result is "a new common sense and with it a new culture and new philosophy which will be rooted in a popular consciousness with the same solidity and imperative quality as traditional beliefs."[23] The individual, through his rejection of the so-called 'common sense' conception of the world of the hegemon has therefore, taken the first step in the creation of an alternative hegemony, a new way of thinking free from the constraints of the ruling class. The individual has thus reached the first stage in aiding in the construction of a truly counter-hegemonic force.

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[19]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 423.

[20]. While Gramsci's arguments regarding 'common sense' may contain subtle differences from Marx's more class-based arguments of "false consciousness," Walzer believes common sense is "Gramsci's version of false consciousness." Walzer, "The Ambiguous Legacy of Antonio Gramsci" *Dissent* 35 (Fall 1988): 444-456, p. 446.

[21]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 419.

[22]. Ibid., pp. 420-421.

The last layer of society that Gramsci examines in reference to its greater relevance to the movement is that of the group, or what he refers to as 'collective man.' Certain aspects of this problematic will be observed more closely when Gramsci's conception of the counter-hegemonic 'organization' is examined. At this point though, it should suffice to assert that since individual consciousness represents the first stage in personal liberation from the 'common sense' world or the dominant beliefs of the time, for this new conception to be most effective, various individuals must necessarily evolve together in the formation of a larger group, united in their ultimate aims and sharing in this universal perception or world view. According to Gramsci, this occurs

> when the individual can associate himself with all the other individuals who want the same changes, and if the changes wanted are rational, the individual can be multiplied an impressive number of times and can obtain a change which is far more radical than at first sight ever seemed possible.[24]

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[23]. Ibid., p. 424.

[24]. Ibid., p. 353. It is interesting to note that Gramsci believes this change of consciousness can actually originate with one individual and eventually spread to the population at large. According to Gramsci: "Should this will be represented by a single individual,

It is important to note that, unlike Marx, Gramsci is much more interested in individual consciousness than class-consciousness inasmuch as it formed the foundation of his thought. Furthermore, when Gramsci does write about groups or class, his emphasis is significantly different from that of Marx.

> Instead of defining a "social group" in socio-economic terms, Gramsci shifts the focus to ideas. According to him, each of us belongs to that 'social group,' i.e., class, which collectively shares the same basic world view.[25]

In fact, it is Gramsci's emphasis on the importance of ideas over purely economic factors that differentiates his writings from most traditional Marxists. Consequently, Gramsci is less interested in directing his message to a specific socio-economic class or group, and is more concerned with diffusing his 'ideology' to as large and receptive an audience as possible. In other words, he is seeking to garner the support of all those groups that are disenchanted with the current socio-economic structure and seek its overthrow.

In his writings, Gramsci goes to great lengths to stress the determining role that ideas, or perhaps more specifically the notion of a 'common world perception,' performs in creating a 'social group.'[26] Most succinctly, Gramsci

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its rationality will be documented by the fact that it comes to be accepted by the many, and accepted permanently: That is by becoming a culture, a form of "good sense," a conception of the world with an ethic that conforms to its structure." Ibid., pp. 345-346.

[25]. Nemeth, *Gramsci's Philosophy*, p. 87.

[26]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 327.

emphasizes: "It is not 'thought' but what people really think that unites or differentiates mankind."[27] As a result, it is a commonality or similarity in experience - a shared perception of repression, exclusion, marginalization - which creates a counter-hegemonic bloc regardless of a common or shared economic condition.

In the final analysis, Gramsci argues that any significant change must therefore be initiated by what he refers to as 'collective man.' According to Gramsci:

> An historical act can only be performed by 'collective man' and this presupposes the attainment of a 'cultural-social unity' through which a multiplicity of dispersed wills, with heterogeneous aims, are welded together with a single aim, on the basis of an equal and common conception of the world.[28]

As will be demonstrated through his analysis of the State (i.e., the hegemon) and the method used to construct a counter-hegemonic bloc, the actual 'type' of world view that manifests itself in an organic totality is less relevant than the fact that it can differentiate itself from that conception of the world being espoused by the ruling power. Consequently, the eventual success or failure of any revolutionary movement will ultimately be judged on its ability to assimilate the heterogeneous wills of its followers into one common goal - the overthrow of the current socio-economic order.

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[27]. Ibid., p. 355.

[28]. Ibid., p. 349.

THE STATE OF AFFAIRS

In Gramsci's analysis of 'the State,' his focus primarily concerns the methods employed by the State through which it retains a firm control over a substantial majority of the population. He demonstrates how the hegemonic or dominant group is able to coopt other groups and prevent them from challenging its power. By penetrating both the State (e.g., institutions such as government and the military) and civil society itself - through a combination of coercion and consent - the dominant group creates a historic bloc with the explicit aim of controlling and exploiting the masses. The relevance of Gramsci's conceptualization of the State is that the dominant group do not just utilize the economic structure - modes of production - of the State to extend its rule but more importantly, employs the superstructure through its promotion and implementation of a certain type of morality, culture, education, and law, whose primary aim is the continuation of 'bourgeoisie rule,' producing what Gramsci refers to as 'common sense.'

However, it should be kept in mind that Gramsci's conceptualization of the State and its ability to broaden both its rule over, and appeal to, the masses, has essentially the same aim as his earlier investigation of society. The objective is to better understand one's self by more effectively comprehending the inner workings of one's enemy. For as Gramsci describes: "Not only does the people have no precise consciousness of its own identity, it is not even conscious of the historical identity or the exact limits of its adversary."[29] Therefore, once more Gramsci demonstrates that his ultimate objective is not to create a parsimonious theory per se, but to use his writings to achieve their practical ends. Consequently, it is only by truly understanding the inner workings and the nature of the contemporary State that the revolutionary movement can employ the appropriate strategy necessary in its definitive struggle against the ruling hegemonic power.

The term most associated with Gramsci's conceptual writings on the state is 'Hegemony.' Gramsci's primary aim in examining the concept of 'Hegemony' is to detail the exact fashion in which 'the State' is able to acquire power and retain its control, and in turn, how the 'working class' can construct a counter-hegemonic force able to challenge the power of the State.[30] Certain concepts, such as 'passive revolution,' 'coercion and consent,' and 'state and civil society' all derive their essential meaning from Gramsci's examination of the hegemonic power of the ruling classes. In each case, Gramsci's principal function is to offer a contemporary explanation regarding the ability of the modern state to preserve its power, even in periods of extreme instability and profound crisis.

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[29]. Ibid., p. 273.

[30]. For the most thorough examination of the term 'Hegemon' in this context see Christine Buci-Glucksmann, "Hegemony and Consent: A Political Strategy," in *Approaches to Gramsci*, ed. Anne Showstack Sassoon (London: Writers and Readers, 1982). Especially, pp. 119-120. Also see Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution*, pp. 170-171.

In the case of 'passive revolution,' Gramsci's writings have led to greater insight into how the state has constructed its current power base and the means through which it actively works to prevent any subservient group from challenging its power. On the one hand, passive revolution explains the process through which the current hegemonic class came to dominate the modern nation through its cooptation of the old feudal (land owning) classes. Consequently, while the older feudal classes retain a degree of influence, they are used primarily to bestow a type of legitimacy on the new 'governing' powers, allowing the new hegemon to assert its dominance and control over society.[31]

The second dimension of the strategy of 'passive revolution' is more important to Gramsci's revolutionary process because it explains how the hegemon consistently and actively works to retain its dominance over society. This strategy is based not on cooptation, but in preventing any serious threat to the regime from developing. As a means of preempting any 'progressive' threat to its power and preserving its control over society, the dominant power will prevent the construction of any counter-hegemonic force by "decapitating its revolutionary potential."[32] In fact, in many cases, the dominant power is able to maintain its hegemonic position based less on the specific policies it pursues (i.e., a positive hegemony), and more on the fact that it is able to exploit the weaknesses of its adversaries.[33]

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[31]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 115.

[32]. Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, pp. 207-210. Also see Anne Showstack Sassoon, "Passive Revolution and the Politics of Reform,"

Related to 'passive revolution' is the idea of 'consent and coercion.' This notion of 'consent and coercion' is central to Gramsci in explaining how the ruling hegemon is able to maintain its power, while preventing any serious challenge to its hegemonic position. While such a dual strategy of coercion and consent appears contradictory, as Gramsci argues, they are in fact complementary methods employed by the hegemon to retain its dominance over the masses. According to Gramsci: "...the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership'."[34] In other words, in all political actions there is a dialectical relationship between the need of force and consent.[35]

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in *Approaches to Gramsci*, ed. Anne Showstack Sassoon (London: Writers and Readers, 1982), pp. 129-136.

[33]. Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, p. 204. It is clear that in Italy, both components of "passive revolution" were utilized in bringing the Fascists to power. While the older 'feudal' classes, such as big business and the petite bourgeoisie, had been coopted into supporting Mussolini - they retained a degree of influence but were clearly in a subordinate position - the Fascist Party used an active policy of repression to keep the Socialist and Communist Parties - the potential hegemons - in a state of perpetual impotence.

[34]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 45.

[35]. Ibid., p. 169. This dichotomous conception of "consent and coercion" is most vividly alluded to when Gramsci examines Machiavelli's Centaur - the half-animal and half-human. He states that "they are the levels of force and of consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilisation, of the individual moment and of the universal moment, of agitation and of propaganda, of tactics and of strategy."

While Gramsci usually applies these concepts in tandem, it is clear that it is his emphasis on the term 'consent' that distinguishes Gramsci from the other Marxists and revolutionaries of his time. For Gramsci, the feeling was that Marx's arguments regarding the state as a coercive instrument of the ruling class could not explain the long periods of social peace enjoyed by supposed antagonistic classes.[36] Consequently, something besides 'naked force' or coercion must explain the relative success of the ruling class in continuing its dominance over the working class.

It is at this point that Gramsci argues that the concept of consent or, more specifically, the function performed by the ideas disseminated by the hegemon, is much more crucial in the maintenance of its rule than those of brute force. Therefore, the ruling classes' success should be viewed as being more contingent on its ability to diffuse its intellectual, moral, and political leadership throughout society, and in the process, garner the spontaneous (i.e., unquestioned) support of the lower classes.[37] Joseph Femia notes the determining function performed by consent or the dissemination of ideas in reproducing the rule of the hegemon.

> Hegemony is therefore the predominance obtained by consent rather than force of one class or group over other classes: it is attained through the myriad ways in which the

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Ibid., p. 170.

[36]. Pellicani, *Gramsci*, p. 27.

[37]. William J. Hartley, "Hegemony and Cultural Politics: The Praxis of Gramsci's Prison Notebooks," *Socialism And Democracy*, 5 (Fall/Winter 1987): 35-54, p. 38.

> institutions of civil society operate to shape directly or indirectly, the cognitive and affective structures, whereby men perceive and evaluate problematic social reality.[38]

Clearly, this idea of 'consent' ties in with Gramsci's earlier arguments regarding the role of 'common sense' in coopting the working class to bourgeois rule. Hence, for Gramsci, the garnering of 'consent' through the ideas, customs, and morals expounded by the hegemon are not just more relevant in terms of the 'legitimacy' of the State than its coercive practices, but in fact, define the very essence of the hegemon itself.

Of course, the primary reason Gramsci allots such extensive space to examining the characteristics of the modern state is because its composition defines the very strategy that any revolutionary movement must embark upon in its greater aim of achieving political power. His views on 'consent' lead Gramsci to argue that any effective seizure of power must first necessitate the acquisition of the active consent of the subordinate classes. Clearly, Gramsci does not view the State as some monolithic entity. Instead, he perceives the modern state as composed of two separate, but intertwined elements. In its most succinct form, Gramsci argues "that State = political society + civil society, in other words, hegemony protected by the armour of coercion."[39] Or as he states elsewhere as "dictatorship + hegemony."[40] In both cases, he alludes to a hegemony based on ideas that manufacture consent, while the political element is a dictatorship that is willing to use force and coercion, if necessary, to maintain its rule.

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[38]. Femia, "Hegemony and Consciousness in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci," p. 31. Also see Pellicani who argues that "the domination of the bourgeoisie was based more on the consent of the subordinate classes than on bourgeois control of the coercive apparatus..." Pellicani, *Gramsci*, p. 3.

[39]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 263.

While it is evident that the two realms - State and civil society - share common goals and strategies, especially in the economic sphere, Gramsci is clear on their distinctive nature.

> The one that can be called civil society that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called "private," and that of "political society" or "the State." These two levels correspond ... to the function of the "Hegemony" which the dominant group exercises throughout society ... [41]

More specifically, political society corresponds to certain coercive instruments of the State, such as the army, police, and the legislature. On the other hand, civil society involves private organizations that assist the hegemon in the dissemination of those ideas that help to reproduce its dominance. In terms of "private organizations and activities," Hartley speaks of those dealing with "the political, religious, fraternal, recreational, etc..."[42] Consequently, while the State and civil society are intricately intertwined in their common aims and shared beliefs, their explicit separateness leads Gramsci to argue that the State can no longer be viewed simply as a monolithic entity to confront. Instead, only by first winning over the consent of civil society can an attempt then be made to seize state power.[43]

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[40]. Ibid., p. 239.

[41]. Ibid., p. 12.

[42]. See Hartley, "Hegemony and Cultural Politics," p. 39.

The final element of the State that Gramsci attempts to conceptualize - which involves both the idea of 'coercion and consent' and the association between the State and civil society - is the relationship that exists between the structure (of production) and the superstructure (of ideas). This is what Gramsci defines as the 'historic bloc.' According to Gramsci:

> Structures and superstructures form an historical bloc. That is to say the complex, contradictory, and discordant ensemble of the superstructures is the reflection of the ensemble of social relations of production.[44]

In other words, "material forces are the content and ideologies the form."[45] Clearly, both the structure and the superstructure are part of a dialectic between economic factors (the forces of production) and cultural forces (the realm of ideas) where each reinforce the other and combine to form an 'organic relationship' known as the 'historic bloc,'[46] established for the sole purpose of maintaining control over the dominated classes.

As a central tenet of Marxist theory, Gramsci argues for the need to acquire a clear understanding of the relationship between the structure or the materialist base of economic relations, and the overarching superstructure of beliefs that must be reproduced by the dominant class. Femia argues:

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[43]. While the difference between political society and civil society is crucial to a better understanding of Gramsci's revolutionary construction, some of these ideas will be examined more thoroughly when we investigate Gramsci's long-term strategy.

[44]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 366.

[45]. Ibid., p. 377.

[46]. See Joll, *Gramsci*, p. 32, and Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution*, p. 176.

> To recapitulate, what Gramsci seems to be saying is that the forces of production more or less follow their own inner logic of development, and determine which sorts of class relations and superstructural elements can take hold in society.[47]

In this context, the structure clearly determines the superstructure and hence the structure or economic modes of production take precedence. This is a view that would certainly be shared by Marx.[48]

However, one must question whether this is the position Gramsci himself assumes. Instead, it would appear that he is much more willing to give precedence to the superstructure over the structure. This view conforms to the position he asserts throughout *The Prison Notebooks* regarding the determining role of ideas and politics in their relation to economics. Even Femia seems to recognize this fact when he later states that "the economic base sets, in a strict manner, the range of possible outcomes, but *free* political and ideological activity is ultimately decisive in determining which alternative prevails."[49] Therefore, it is clear that "the reproduction of these [economic] conditions had to be provided for by the political and ideological superstructure."[50]

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[47]. Femia, "Hegemony and Consciousness in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci," p. 37.

[48]. Hartley takes a similar position when he argues that ""superstructures" must then be adjusted to the reality of the new "structure"." Hartley, *"Hegemony and Cultural Politics,"* pp. 48-49.

[49]. Femia, "Hegemony and Consciousness in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci," p. 38. (Emphasis added - TJB).

Gramsci himself argues for the predominance of ideas or the superstructure in an attempt to refute the belief that economics determines the superstructure - in essence, that economics is everything.

> The claim, presented as an essential postulate of historical materialism, that every fluctuation of politics and ideology can be presented and expounded as an immediate expression of the structure, must be contested in theory as primitive infantilism.[51]

In fact, Gramsci goes so far as to state that: "Everything is political, even philosophy ... and the only 'philosophy' is history in action, that is, life itself."[52]

The function the superstructure performs in determining the range of possible outcomes is demonstrated by the extent to which the State attempts to translate its economic strength into moral and cultural power. As a consequence of this

> every State is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes.[53]

Therefore, the superstructure is clearly rooted in the economic structure of the State, but it is the superstructure of ideas (cultural and moral) that determine the ability of the hegemon to continue its rule. Consequently, it is on the level of the superstructure that Gramsci believes any successful counter-hegemonic challenge must be fought.

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[50]. Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, p. 114.

[51]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 407.

[52]. Ibid., p. 357.

[53]. Ibid., p. 258.

Gramsci elaborates on the importance of the superstructure by demonstrating the means by which both the educational and judicial systems are employed as the principal instruments of the ruling class in its attempt to create the 'proper' conditions necessary for its continued economic domination of the State and society.[54] In the case of the law, the law becomes 'an instrument' in the State's attempt "to create and maintain a certain type of civilisation and of citizen ... and to eliminate certain customs and attitudes and to disseminate others..."[55] Therefore, the law is not just a "punitive sanction," but it must also contain "moral implications."[56] In other words, the superstructure not only allows the State to punish those that disagree with its policies, but it also bestows upon the State a type of universal morality that can be used to brand those that dissent - against both its specific policies, and more importantly, the overall structure of the capitalist system - as delinquents, deviants, and hence, as generally immoral.

In one sense, the aim of Gramsci's conceptualization of the relationship of the structure to the superstructure is to examine the State in a more purely theoretical form. As Gramsci states:

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[54]. Ibid., p. 258.

[55]. Ibid., p. 246.

[56]. Ibid., p. 247.

> It is the problem of the relations between structure and superstructure which must be accurately posed and resolved if the forces which are active in the history of a particular period are to be correctly analyzed, and the relation between them determined.[57]

Consequently, this demonstrates Gramsci's fundamental belief that only with a thorough knowledge of one's enemy can one truly know oneself.

However, as with all of Gramsci's writings the true value of his analysis involves its practical applicability in the real world. In other words, how does a better understanding of the relationship between the structure and superstructure serve as a guide to concrete revolutionary activity? Furthermore, can this conceptualization serve as a framework that will assist in furthering the goals of the revolutionary movement? Using the study of history as his guide, Gramsci demonstrates that the critical reason to examine the relationship between the structure and the superstructure is to discover that moment when the two realms have deviated to a sufficient extent to permit the counter-hegemon its chance to strike. In this sense, Gramsci utilizes recent French history to demonstrate the importance of such a divergence.

> It is precisely the study of these "intervals" of varying frequency [the eight convulsions that occurred in France between 1789-1870] which enables one to reconstruct the relations on the one hand between structure and superstructure and on the other between the development of an organic movement and conjunctural movement in the structure.[58]

Consequently, it is when this divergence occurs between structure and superstructure, when the ideas and beliefs used to garner the support of the masses seem void and without meaning, that the counter-hegemon is allotted its best opportunity to attack. It is for this reason that Gramsci argues a revolutionary movement will only be successful if it is constructed, prepared, and ready for such an occurrence.

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[57]. Ibid., p. 177.

[58]. Ibid., p. 180.

THE STEPS IN THE CREATION OF A COUNTER-HEGEMONIC FORCE

(A) IDEOLOGY

A primary requirement in creating a revolutionary force able to confront the dominant group or hegemon is the ability to construct and elaborate upon a coherent, well-developed ideology. This ideology becomes the means through which the masses can be unified and prepared for their confrontation. In fact, its role as an instrument in unifying the masses - through preparation and education - is the most important function of a revolutionary ideology, while its actual content and character remain secondary. Consequently, ideology is transformed beyond simple speculation and unites theory and practice in its means of defeating the State. With the assistance of the so-called 'organic intellectuals,' the overall aim of an ideology is to form a degree of self-awareness or self- consciousness which allows the counter-hegemon to found a new type of state. This goal is to be achieved through the creation of a new kind of culture and morality - distinct and separate - so that it can compete with the ideas of the hegemon for the hearts and the minds of the people. Gramsci realizes the determining role ideas (i.e., the superstructure) play in influencing men and thus, in changing history itself. For it is only by intervening concretely in the real world that reality can be changed and only through action that a new conception of the world can be sought by the counter-hegemon.

The fact that ideology is utilized primarily as a means to construct a counter-hegemonic force is essential to the understanding of Gramsci's work as a guide to revolutionary activity. Therefore, Gramsci is not interested in creating an ideology per se (i.e., a set of practical programs and reforms), but in using ideology as an instrument to unify divergent interests. Thus, ideology transforms itself into an independent force as it becomes less concerned with the end result than with providing a means to that end. Its role is to unify through generalizations, not to discern a specific set of policies or to provide a concrete image of what form or shape society and the state will assume in the future.[59]

This role of ideology as a unifier of disparate groups and interests becomes, in Gramsci's opinion, the crux of the problem for the counter-hegemonic force. Hence, succinctly stated, the "problem is that of preserving the ideological unity of the entire social bloc which that ideology serves to cement and to unify ... the need for the doctrinal unity of the whole mass."[60] In fact, the ability of an ideology to unify the masses becomes for Gramsci, the true test of an ideology's applicability, not its effectiveness in solving practical day-to-day problems. Thus "mass adhesion or non-adhesion to an ideology is the real critical test of the rationality and historicity of modes of thinking."[61]

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[59]. Clearly, if one of the primary roles of a revolutionary ideology is to garner as much support as possible, specific policies or programs would simply discourage those individuals who may otherwise have backed the counter-hegemonic force. This is why these movements are more interested in critiquing the current regime, than in providing detailed solutions.

However, these aforementioned statements are not meant to suggest that the content of a specific ideology is completely irrelevant. The ideology itself must make sense to the people and help instil within them a belief in the fundamental aims of the movement. As Gramsci states: "No mass action is possible unless the mass itself is convinced of the ends it wants to reach and the methods to be applied."[62] Consequently, Gramsci differentiates between ideologies that contain the potential for mass attraction and those whose internal contradictions would ultimately fail to persuade the masses. According to Gramsci:

> One must distinguish between historically organic ideologies, those that is, which are necessary to a given structure and ideologies that are arbitrary, rationalistic, or "willed." To the extent that ideologies are historically necessary they have a validity which is "psychological" they "organise" human masses, and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their political struggle, etc.[63]

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[60]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 328.

[61]. Ibid., 341.

[62]. Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, ed. Louis Marks (New York: International Publishers, 1957), p. 36.

[63]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 376-377.

In addition to its principal role as a unifier of the populace, ideology must also prepare and educate the masses for the immediate struggle at hand.[64] Throughout his writings on the revolutionary process, Gramsci emphasizes the important function ideology performs as a preparer and educator of the masses in their confrontation against the State. In terms of the preparatory role of ideology, Gramsci states:

> It is necessary for the Party in an organized fashion to educate its members and raise their ideological level ... mass ideological preparation is thus a necessity of revolutionary struggle, and one of the indispensable conditions for victory.[65]

One of the most important contributions made by Gramsci in his conception of the ideological revolutionary movement is his belief in the need to unify both theory and practice. Consequently, theory without practice is mere speculation, and only a meshing of theory and practice - or word and deed - can create the necessary context for revolutionary change. According to Gramsci:

> If the problem of the identification of theory and practice is to be raised, it can be done in this sense, that one can construct, on a specific practice, a theory, by coinciding and identifying itself with the decisive elements of the practice itself, can accelerate the historical process that

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[64] This involves not simply an understanding of the overall aims of the revolutionary movement, but an ability to detect, expose, and isolate "the 'points of least resistance' in the trenchworks of capitalism where political force can most fruitfully be applied." Hartley, "Hegemony and Cultural Politics," p. 41.

[65] Gramsci as quoted in Showstack Sassoon. Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, p. 86. Also see Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 110. In fact, many of Gramsci's most passionate disagreements with other Socialist/Communist Party leaders involved this question of the active preparation of the rank and file members of the party. While many high ranking officials endorsed the idea of the spontaneous upheaval of the masses, Gramsci argued that ideological preparation and education was a necessary component of a successful revolutionary movement.

> is going on, rendering practice more homogeneous, more coherent, more efficient in all its elements and thus, in other words, developing its potential to the maximum: or alternatively given a certain theoretical position one can organize the practical element which is essential for the theory to be realised.[66]

It is these two components that must unite to create not simply ideologies, but ideologies of movement, which have the ability to transform ideas into practice. As a result, the sole purpose of theory must be for political action and its role in the eventual seizure of power.[67]

The need to unify theory with practice is emphasized by certain Gramscian scholars as the crucial element in his revolutionary theory. In the opinion of Giuseppe Fiori, this element of Gramsci's thinking has been a principal component in his work since his early involvement in the socialist movement. Even as early as 1916 as a writer for the socialist journal *Avanti,* Fiori asserts, the heart of Gramsci's view entailed the "double conviction that theory which could not be translated into fact was useless abstraction, and that political action, not illuminated by theory was impulsive and fruitless."[68] As a consequence, it was clear that the role of "thought and action were inseparable in his life."[69] Showstack Sassoon concurs when she argues that the crux of Gramsci's work involves "the forging of a link between theory and practice, between intellectual analysis and a revolutionary political project..."[70] Consequently, only a linking of theory to practice can create a counter-hegemonic bloc both conscious of its role and able to practically seize power at a particular moment of the revolutionary struggle.

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[66]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks,* p. 365. For some other examples of Gramsci's examination of this relationship between theory and practice see pp. 115-116, 330, and 344-345.

[67]. Michael Walzer, "The Ambiguous Legacy of Antonio Gramsci," p. 445. Also see Pellicani, *Gramsci* pp. 84-85.

[68]. Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci,* p. 102. Also see Nemeth, *Gramsci's Philosophy,* p. 90.

[69]. Joll, *Gramsci,* p. 12.

Another critical element in Gramsci's conception and construction of a revolutionary ideology is the role to be performed by what Gramsci terms the 'organic intellectuals.' This term remains one of the key original contributions of Gramsci to counter-hegemonic discourse. If the role of ideology is to unify and prepare the masses in their confrontation with the hegemon, then the function of the organic intellectuals is to create the conditions that make possible the dissemination of such an ideology. For it is the organic intellectuals, through their connection with the masses, who are principally invested with the functional responsibility of elevating the level of consciousness - self criticism - of the masses and leading the charge in the founding of a new type of State. It is also the organic intellectuals who must demonstrate that ideas do have a momentum and power of their own and that they can actively intervene to create the new type of culture and morality sought by the revolutionary movement.

Gramsci devotes a considerable amount of time to the role of the organic intellectuals, thus demonstrating his keen awareness of the necessary function they must perform in creating the fundamental link between theory and practice in the building of a counter-hegemonic force. For Gramsci, the fundamental question then becomes one of how to create a class of intellectuals organically linked to the "working class," both in terms of their practical interests and in their philosophical outlook. Gramsci examines this dilemma confronting both the organic intellectuals, who need a mass base to achieve their revolutionary aims, and the working class, who require clear guidance in overcoming their exploited state.

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[70]. Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, p. xviii.

> The working class, like the bourgeoisie before it, is capable of developing from within its ranks its own organic intellectuals, and the function of the political party, whether mass or vanguard, is that of channelling the activity of these organic intellectuals and providing a link between the class and certain sections of the traditional intelligentsia.[71]

Gramsci emphasizes the idea that only a more organic link between the intellectuals and masses can produce the type of cohesion necessary to create a historic bloc to rival that of the dominant class in his section on the relationship between "knowing-understanding-feeling." For Gramsci, it is the association between these terms that defines both the real and ideal reciprocal relationship desired between the intellectuals and the masses. According to Gramsci, the problem involves the fact that: "The popular element 'feels' but does not always know or understand. The intellectual element 'knows' but does not always understand and in particular does not always feel."[72] In Gramsci's view, 'understanding' will only occur through the counter-hegemonic organization when a fundamental connection can be established between the intellectuals and the masses.

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[71]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 4.

> If the relationship between intellectuals and people-nation, between the leaders and the led, the rulers and the ruled is provided by an organic cohesion in which feeling-passion becomes understanding and thence knowledge (not mechanically but in a way that is alive), then and only then is the relationship one of representation. Only then can there take place an exchange of individual elements between the rulers and the ruled, leaders and led, and can the shared life be realized, which alone is a social force - with the creation of the historical bloc.[73]

While these aforementioned statements define in a ideal sense the core relationship sought between the two component parts of the movement, Gramsci also addresses the more practical function of the organic intellectuals. First, it is clear that the principal role of the organic intellectual must entail that of an organizer and educator of the masses. This corresponds to the idea that the principal function of ideology itself is to unify (organize) and prepare (educate). Therefore, according to Gramsci: "What matters is the function [of the organic intellectual], which is directive and organisational, i.e., educative, i.e., intellectual."[74] In fact, Gramsci goes as far to contrast this new role of the "organic" intellectual with that of the more traditional conception of the term.

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[72]. Ibid., p. 418.

[73]. Ibid., p. 418. In this sense, it is interesting to examine Michael Walzer's arguments regarding the 'alleged' links between the organic intellectuals and the working class they were suppose to represent. According to Walzer: "With few exceptions, the intellectuals of the party were not "organic intellectuals" of the working class. They neither emerged from the class ... nor integrated themselves within it." Walzer, "The Ambiguous Legacy of Antonio Gramsci," pp. 450-451. Yet, in fairness to Gramsci, he seems painfully aware that this is a crucial problem that the revolutionary Party must overcome if it is to be successful in creating a counter-hegemonic bloc.

> The mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passions but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, permanent persuader, and not just a simple orator.[75]

This view corresponds with his overall conception of the revolutionary movement as not one simply of speculation and theory, but more importantly, as one of constant and active preparation.

The second principal role of the intellectual, beyond that of an organizer and educator, is to provide the counter-hegemon with an alternative conception of the world. In other words, it is the grander theoretical function of the organic intellectual to create a fundamentally new type of State, based on a new morality and culture substantially different from the one espoused by the present hegemon. According to Gramsci:

> It can be observed that the "organic" intellectuals which every new class creates alongside itself and elaborates in the course of its development are for the most part "specialisations" of partial aspects of the primitive activity of the new social type which the new class has brought into prominence.[76]

If this new type of State conceived by the organic intellectuals and desired by the Party is to be truly unique, it must therefore also be a separate and total conception free from the contaminating elements of the ruling hegemon. Consequently, Gramsci views the "philosophy of the praxis" as inherently unique and distinct from all other theories or ideologies. According to Gramsci:

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[74]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 16.

[75]. Ibid., p. 10.

[76]. Ibid., p. 6.

> [T]he philosophy of praxis is "sufficient unto itself," that it contains in itself all the fundamental elements needed to construct a total and integral conception of the world, a total philosophy and theory of natural science, and not only that but everything that is needed to give life to an integral practical organisation of society, that is, to become a total integral civilization.[77]

Gramsci continues in this vein by claiming that

> a theory is "revolutionary" precisely to the extent that it is an element of conscious separation and distinction into two camps and is a peak inaccessible to the enemy camp... The philosophy of praxis has no need of support from alien sources.[78]

It is clear that Gramsci has in mind the example of the Jacobins during the French Revolution as the specific model he intends to replicate in the creation of this new type of state. As the case of the Jacobins demonstrated, their success was based on the fact that they had adequately prepared the ground for their ascension to power through an initial stage of critical analysis. Consequently, it was shown that for any theoretical development to be successful it must be based on concrete action. It was here, above all else, that the Jacobins succeeded in changing the fundamental nature of the State and attained the creation of a totally new order.[79]

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[77]. Ibid., p. 462.

[78]. Ibid., p. 462.

[79]. Pellicani, *Gramsci*, p. 53. In addition to the Jacobins, the other 'organization' that Gramsci sought to emulate in its ability to both

According to Gramsci:

> If it is true that the Jacobins 'forced' its hand, it is also true that this always occurred in the direction of real historical development. For not only did they organize a bourgeois government, i.e., make the bourgeoisie the dominant class - they did more. They created the bourgeois State, made the bourgeoisie into the leading hegemonic class of the nation, in other words gave the new State a permanent basis and created the compact modern French nation.[80]

In summary, it must be remembered that ideology, or more specifically theory itself, does not serve merely an organizational or preparatory function. By intervening practically and concretely in the real world, ideas themselves can acquire an independent force to change the conceptions and beliefs held by a certain segment of the population.[81] As Joll argues: "...he [Gramsci] went further than any other Marxist thinker in recognizing the importance of the superstructure and the force of ideas in producing historical change...."[82] Ideas influence events, man's will can impact history, and in the end, perhaps Gramsci's greatest concern was not just "the

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theoretically and practically provide a clear alternative conception of the world (i.e., reality) was the Roman Catholic Church. In terms of the similarities between early "Christianity" and "Communism," Pellicani argues: "Both are ideological revolutionary movements because 'they introduce a total schism between the supporters of the old world and the new world;' both are bearers of a new conception of life that conflicts openly with dominant ideologies, both seek to rebuild human society on radically different bases." Pellicani, *Gramsci*, p. 68. See Pellicani, Chapter 6 "The Marxist Gnosis," pp. 68-76.

[80]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 79. A similar pattern could be said to have occurred in both Russia and Iran after their revolutionary experiences. In both cases, the overthrow of the established powers did not constitute a simple exchange of government, but a different State, morality, and culture based on a fundamentally novel conception of the world.

[81]. For some examples see Pellicani, *Gramsci*, p. xiv, Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution*, p. 133, and Femia, "Hegemony and Consciousness in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci," p. 29.

[82]. Joll, *Gramsci*, p. 85.

problem of how to establish a new State," but "the problem of how to intervene in a concrete reality in order to bring about [this] certain aim."[83]

B) ORGANIZATION

The second essential element necessary for the construction of a counter-hegemonic bloc is the organizational framework of the movement. Gramsci's work in this area focuses upon what he refers to as the "Modern Prince" - the ideal contemporary political party. It is through the activity of the political party that the theoretical and practical elements of the revolutionary movement are fused and the leadership and the masses intimately linked. While the role of the leadership or vanguard of the Party is obviously essential for the creation of a legitimate counter-hegemonic force, Gramsci places special emphasis on the crucial function the individual members of the Party will perform in determining the eventual success of the revolutionary movement. Consequently, it is only with the active participation of the individual members of the Party, and through their loyalty, conviction, and faith in the goals of the movement that the masses and the leadership are transformed into what Gramsci terms an "organic unity." As Gramsci argues, only this type of organic relationship can create the organizational framework necessary for the counter-hegemonic bloc to achieve its fundamental aim of seizing power from the current hegemonic power.

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[83]. Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, p. 153.

Gramsci bases his conception of the ideal revolutionary organization on the political party and what he deems the "Modern Prince." It is through this particular understanding of the political party that Gramsci is able to assimilate the theoretical with the practical, since the Party functions "both as a political educator and as an umbrella organization coordinating a national movement."[84] In his allusion to Machiavelli's famous work, Gramsci does differentiate his conceptualization of the Prince from the more traditional fashion in which Machiavelli conceived the term. Thus, Gramsci states:

> The modern prince, the myth-prince, cannot be a real person, a concrete individual ... history has already provided this organism and it is the political party - the first cell in which there come together germs of a collective will tending to become universal and total.[85]

Inasmuch as Gramsci allots the organic intellectuals the role of imparting the counter-hegemon's theoretical conception of the "new moral order," it is the political party that must become the concrete expression of such a goal. Therefore, according to Gramsci:

> The Prince could be a head of State, or the leader of government, but it could also be a political leader whose aim is to conquer a State, or to found a new type of State; in this sense, "Prince" could be translated in modern terms as "political party."[86]

For Gramsci, the aim of founding a "new type of State" becomes, in essence, the sole reason for creating such a "political party." In fact, he argues that such a Party is "rationally and historically created for that end."[87] At other points in his writings, Gramsci reiterates this view regarding the fundamental function of the modern political party:

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[84]. Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution*, p. 207. Also see Pellicani, *Gramsci*, p. 65.

[85]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 129.

[86]. Ibid., pp. 252-253.

> In the modern world, a party is such - integrally and not, as happens, a fraction of a larger party - when it is conceived, organised, and led in ways and in forms such that it will develop integrally into a State (an integral State, and not into a government technically understood) and into a conception of the world.[88]

In this sense, Gramsci's interpretation of the role of the party is one in which the fundamental objective is not the simple competition for power with other like parties (i.e., the 'catch-all' parties of liberal democracy), but an overthrow of the existing regime and installation of a fundamentally different socio-economic order.

If the basic aim of this type of political party is the creation of a new or alternative conception of the world, Gramsci realizes that the only way this goal can be achieved is through the practical creation of what he terms the "collective will." Hence, the Party must become an expression of the very "collective will" it aims to represent,[89] while being "directed towards goals which are concrete and rational."[90] Therefore, in Gramsci's conception of the modern political party the theoretical conception of a new type of State through the practical creation of a collective will become the two pillars - the theoretical and the practical[91] - on which the Modern Prince (i.e., the political party) embarks on its supreme goal of constructing a counter-hegemonic bloc able to defeat the currently entrenched hegemon.

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[87]. Ibid., p. 147.

[88]. Ibid., p. 276.

[89]. Ibid., p. 129.

[90]. Ibid., p. 130.

There are three integral parts to Gramsci's conceptualization of the modern political party. These are the "principal cohesive," "intermediate," and "mass" elements.[92] These elements will be examined more closely below, but it is clear that each corresponds to those components perceived as necessary to all such movements: the leadership, the vanguard, and the individual members or mass component of the revolutionary organization.

Like most 'political scientists' when examining the problematic of political organization, Gramsci focuses on the importance of leadership. In terms of the primary function allotted the leadership in the formation of a political organization Gramsci states: "The first element is that there really do exist rulers and the ruled - the entire science and art of politics are based on this primordial, and ... irreducible fact."[93] Given this reality, he asserts that

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[91]. Christine Buci-Glucksmann makes a similar argument regarding the creation of a collective political will or historic bloc in which these twin pillars are represented through a unification of the ideological superstructure (theoretical) and the economic base (practical). Buci-Glucksmann, "Hegemony and Consent," pp. 119-120.

[92]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 152-153.

[93]. Ibid., p. 144.

> it will have to be considered how one can lead most effectively (given certain ends); hence how the leaders may be prepared (and it is more precisely in this that the first stage of the art and science of politics consists); and how, on the other hand, one can know the lines of least resistance, or the most rational lines along which to proceed if one wishes to secure the obedience of the led or the ruled.[94]

It is clear from the aforementioned quotation that Gramsci understands the role of leadership in a revolutionary organization does not simply involve being an authority figure or disciplinarian. Instead, any successful leader must be able to organize, unify, and prepare the masses while being adept in his/her interpretation of the concrete environment (i.e., 'know thine enemy').[95] Gramsci examines this element of leadership when he affirms that a party needs a

> principal cohesive element, which centralises nationally and renders effective and powerful a complex of forces which left to themselves would count for little or nothing. This element is endowed with great cohesive, centralising, and disciplinary powers; and also - and indeed this is perhaps the basis for the others - with the power of innovation.[96]

Gramsci uses the example of generals and their role as military tacticians to emphasize the function the leadership performs within the greater movement.[97] As Louis Marks argues with regard to Gramsci's views on leadership:

> One thing stood out clearly [for Gramsci]: the need for resolute leadership and an understanding of the immense problems involved in preparing the working classes organisationally, politically, and culturally for the great tasks which lay ahead.[98]

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[94]. Ibid., p. 144.

[95]. Anne Showstack Sassoon, "Hegemony, War of Position, and Political Intervention," p. 107.

[96]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 152.

[97]. Ibid., pp. 152-153.

[98]. Marks, "Introduction" in Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, p. 13.

There is one final characteristic of leadership that Gramsci recognizes as essential. In many instances, a leader not only performs what can be termed tangible functions; instead, sometimes the greater measure of a leader's worth may be based on the intangibles one provides, such as the moral strength he/she instils in one's followers through the sheer weight of one's character. Consequently, Gramsci sought a leader or leaders who could instil in the masses a belief in the cause and a willingness to sacrifice everything - even their lives - for the greater good of the movement. Therefore, according to Gramsci:

> The question [political leadership] becomes even more complex and difficult in wars of position, fought by huge masses who are only able to endure the immense muscular, nervous, and physical strain with the aid of great reserves of moral strength. Only a very skilful political leadership, capable of taking into account the deep aspirations and feeling of those human masses, can prevent disintegration and defeat.[99]

In many ways, this abstract quality of leadership becomes more important than certain measurable characteristics in leading the revolutionary movement closer to its fruition and the goal of political power. For it is questionable if certain 'revolutionary' movements would have succeeded without the guidance, leadership, and character of a Lenin, Gandhi, Mao, or Khomeini.

In the introduction to this section the term 'vanguard' was associated with what Gramsci defined as the "intermediate" element. According to Gramsci, the intermediate element

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[99]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 88.

"articulates the first element [mass] with the second [principal cohesive] and maintains contact between them, not only physically but also morally and intellectually."[100] Yet, while several Gramsci scholars assert the importance of the concept of "vanguard" in the context of Gramsci's writings, the term itself is conspicuous by its absence from *The Prison Notebooks*.[101]

In spite of the fact that Gramsci's later writings (i.e., *The Prison Notebooks*) do not specifically refer to the term "vanguard,"[102] the ideas surrounding the function of such a vanguard - the active organization of the masses for common action - do appear under various guises. It would appear that in *The Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci refers to the same ideas these writers develop under the concept of "vanguard," but in relation to different aspects of the revolutionary movement. Gramsci appears more interested in giving the "organic intellectuals" and the "leadership" of the movement the primary function of organizing, educating, and preparing the masses, a role these authors seem more willing to allocate to the vanguard.[103] In spite of these differences in terminology, the most important feature of Gramsci's writings on the function of the "intermediate level" in the construction of a revolutionary movement is his emphasis on their role in uniting the movement into an organic whole - a point already addressed in reference to the organic intellectuals - and not his use or nonuse of specific concepts.

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[100]. Ibid., p. 153.

[101]. For some examples see Hoare and Nowell, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. xcvi, Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci*, p. 127, Joll, *Gramsci*, p. 52, and Femia, "Hegemony and Consciousness in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci," p. 40.

[102]. While Gramsci does not specifically use the term vanguard in *The Prison Notebooks*, he did address this issue in the early 1920s while writing for *Ordine Nuovo*. In reference to the revolutionary vanguard, Gramsci argues that "it is the duty of the proletarian vanguard to keep the revolutionary spirit permanently alive in the masses, to create the conditions in which the masses will be ready for action, in which the masses respond instantly to revolutionary orders." Gramsci as quoted in Joll, *Gramsci*, p. 52.

The final component of Gramsci's organizational framework is what he refers to as the "mass" element. As with the "principal cohesive" and "intermediate" elements Gramsci argues that the individual (mass element) must play a concerted role in the overall revolutionary struggle. Therefore, a party needs

> a mass element composed of ordinary, average men, whose participation takes the form of discipline and loyalty, rather than any creative spirit or organisational ability. Without these the party would not exist...[104]

In fact, it can be persuasively argued that one factor that differentiated Gramsci most sharply from his predecessors within both the Marxist tradition and his own Italian Socialist/Communist Party was the crucial role he was willing to allot the individual members of the party in the overall revolutionary struggle. In other words, to Gramsci, the masses are not simply a quantified number or an instrument to be utilized and manipulated by the elites of the party in the revolutionary struggle. In contrast to others within the movement, Gramsci recognizes the value of each individual by asserting that since "all men are philosophers,"[105] they should be considered "intellectuals" in the grander sense.

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[103]. Or, as Adamson comments in reference to this intermediate level, it is the "middle-level cadres" who are allocated the role of fusing "structure and superstructure directly into the party." Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution*, p. 213.

[104]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 152.

This willingness to recognize the inherent worth of each individual leads Gramsci to stress the important function the character of every member performs in terms of the greater movement. In reference to the role of the individual and his character, Gramsci states:

> Elements of party life [include]: Character (resistance to the pressures of surpassed cultures), honour (fearless will in maintaining the new type of culture and life), dignity (awareness of operating for a higher end).[106]

As far as Gramsci is concerned, the argument can be made that quality is more important than quantity. In fact, in this regard he does claim that depending on "the level of strategic preparation [it] can give victory to forces which are apparently (i.e., quantitatively) inferior to those of the enemy."[107] It is clear that, in his recognition of the worth of each individual member of the movement, Gramsci understands the need for strong character, not only in its leaders, but in its followers as well.

In addition to the importance of character, Gramsci allots a crucial role to the active participation of all the members of the revolutionary party. Consequently, at all times the active participation of the rank and file is essential because, as Gramsci argues, no-one can be exactly sure when the proper conditions will arise that will necessitate the active intervention of the masses.

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[105]. Ibid., p. 347.

[106]. Ibid., p. 268.

[107]. Ibid., p. 217.

> In other words, the impossibility [of revolution] existed in so far as that concentrated and instantaneous form was not preceded by long ideological and political preparation, organically devised in advance to reawaken popular passions and enable them to be concentrated and brought simultaneously to detonation point.[108]

In fact, Gramsci goes so far as to state that: "The problem [of revolutionary construction] was to reconstruct a hegemonic apparatus for these formerly passive and apolitical elements."[109] Therefore, in the end, it is only constant and concerted preparation - conducted through an active and concrete interaction between the leadership and the masses - which will create the conditions necessary for revolution.[110]

While the active participation of the masses is an essential ingredient to a successful counter-hegemonic force, Gramsci also appreciates those more traditional individual qualities and characteristics desired by all parties. In other words, Gramsci recognizes the important role played by such qualities as faith, loyalty, and conviction in the greater goals of the movement. In fact, for Gramsci: "The most important element is undoubtably one whose character is determined not by reason but by faith."[111] In this sense, Gramsci once more utilizes the ideal established by the Jacobins during the French Revolution as the standard against which all other potential revolutionary movements should be judged:

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[108]. Ibid., p. 110.

[109]. Ibid., p. 229.

[110]. In fact, according to Joll, a novel aspect of Gramsci's thought was his attempt "to find a new form of revolutionary organization which would combine effective leadership with real participation by rank and file..." Joll, *Gramsci*, p. 10.

> They [the Jacobins] were convinced of the absolute truth of their slogans about equality, fraternity, and liberty, and what is more important, the great popular masses whom the Jacobins stirred up and drew into the struggle were also convinced of the truth.[112]

One final aspect to be discussed regarding the role of faith and conviction in the ultimate objectives of the movement is the implicit understanding that these beliefs cannot be forcibly imposed on the individual members of the party. In other words, only the voluntary acceptance of the goals of the revolutionary movement can produce a true belief in its highest ideals. As Nemeth comments:

> If Marxism is to become the philosophy of our time, Gramsci believes, it will not be through the forceful imposition of it on all strata of society, but through logically convincing people ... that it adequately meets their needs.[113]

Even within the party itself, only true conviction can create a fundamental unity of faith. Therefore, while discussions and disputes over minor issues may have a role, each individual member must willingly and freely accept the ultimate objectives of the movement.[114] Consequently, as Gramsci understands, the 'truth' of the movement itself - in both its purpose and aim - will be the only requirement necessary to entice all logical and rational people to follow the party to its inevitable conclusion.

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[111] Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 339.

[112] Ibid., p. 78. Once more, a comparison can be drawn between Gramsci's conception of the ideal revolutionary movement and the actual achievements of the Roman Catholic Church. According to Joll, one of the reasons Gramsci admired, and hence, sought to emulate the church was his desire to create "a faith which would influence every aspect of life of its adherents." Joll, *Gramsci*, p. 26.

[113] Nemeth, *Gramsci's Philosophy*, p. 16.

In addition to faith and conviction, the other key characteristic present in Gramsci's conceptualization of the ideal organization refers to the discipline and obedience that is required from the individual to the higher cause. For Gramsci, the strict obedience of each individual member towards the movement and its leaders is crucial for the creation of a truly unified revolutionary force.

> For the belief is common that obedience must be automatic, once it is a question of the same group; and that not only must it come about without any demonstration of necessity or rationality being needed, but it must be unquestioning.[115]

Gramsci emphasizes the necessary component of obedience most succinctly in his section entitled "The Fable of the Beaver." It is here he states that "the party, which is an embryonic State structure, can allow no division of its political power."[116] As a result "every member of the party, whatever his position or his responsibilities, is still a member of the party and subordinate to its leadership."[117] All these statements help to demonstrate the crucial importance Gramsci places on the need for strict and absolute obedience within the revolutionary organization.

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[114]. Joll, *Gramsci*, p. 64.

[115]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 145.

[116]. Ibid., p. 226.

[117]. Ibid., p. 226.

The final component of Gramsci's conception of the ideal organization involves what can be termed his belief in the need for homogeneity or unity within the revolutionary movement. In fact, Gramsci states that the cohesion or homogeneity exhibited between the leaders and followers of any movement defines its very character.

> Hence the conclusion that in building a party, it is necessary to give it a "monolithic character" rather than base it on secondary questions; therefore painstaking care that there should be homogeneity between the leadership and the rank and file, between the leaders and their mass following.[118]

In arguing for the importance of what he terms "organicity" in the model party, Gramsci states:

> 'Organicity' can only be found in democratic centralism, which is so to speak a "centralism" in movement - i.e., a continual adaptation of the organization to the real movement, a matching of thrusts from below with orders from above, a continuous insertion of elements thrown up from the depths of the rank and file into the solid framework of the leadership apparatus which ensures continuity and the regular accumulation of experience.[119]

In many ways, this conception of "organicity" encompasses all the key components of organization already examined. The role of the political party, the responsibility of the leadership, and the active participation of the masses are all involved in a constant adaptation in hopes of bringing the revolutionary movement to its final fruition.

In the final analysis, the degree of "organic unity" achieved by a particular organization is probably the most crucial component in determining the eventual success or failure of a revolutionary movement. As Showstack Sassoon asserts:

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[118]. Ibid., p. 158.

[119]. Ibid., p. 188.

> For a revolutionary party to be the weapon which the working class needs to seize state power, it has to be unified and disciplined and threats of splits had to be avoided... The internal life of the party had to represent the kind of organic unity it sought to create in society at large.[120]

Consequently, this overall need for "organic unity" supersedes particular issues relating to the organizational framework of a movement. In fact, it entails the very ideology of the Party and its greater conceptions of both society and the world at large. Gramsci himself best summarizes this view of the ideal organization when he states: "It [the proper organization] requires an organic unity between theory and practice, between intellectual strata and popular masses, between rulers and ruled."[121] In fact, one could say that in this statement lies the very essence of Gramsci's conception of the entire revolutionary process.

(C) LONG-TERM STRATEGY

The final component in Gramsci's construction of a counter-hegemonic bloc is a well-developed strategy. Gramsci is very clear that any successful strategy must be active, deliberate, long-term, and directed towards the achievement of concrete goals. As previously examined, in one sense, this involves the ideological preparation and political education of the masses. However, in terms of the necessary strategy, Gramsci emphasizes the importance of both the leadership and the masses comprehending the concrete situation, (i.e., both the unique character of the national context and the nature of the struggle itself). Therefore, it is necessary to "know thine enemy," since it is only by basing a strategy on a thorough knowledge of one's opponent that a counter-hegemonic bloc can be constructed in complete opposition to the current hegemon in its dialectic totality. It is at this point that the revolutionary movement has embarked upon what Gramsci terms a 'war of position.' In contemporary times, only a prolonged war of position aspiring first to win over civil society to the ideas of the counter-hegemon will be successful against the entrenched power of the State. By examining Gramsci's promotion of this type of 'long-term' program it will become evident that this strategy, along with his views on the role of ideology and organization, form the core of Gramsci's thinking on how to construct the counter-hegemonic bloc which is fundamental to the revolutionary process.

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[120]. Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, p. 88.

[121]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 190.

In a general sense, it is clear that Gramsci promotes a type of strategy for the counter-hegemon that is not immediate and confrontational, but instead active, interventionist and focused on long-term objectives. According to Hoare and Smith:

> Gramsci's position was ... that revolutionary politics must necessarily be an active intervention in history and could

> not consist simply in adopting "correct" positions and waiting to be proved right; waiting for the historical process to provide the circumstances in which the ruling class would topple, the true revolutionaries would be acknowledged by the masses and socialism could be ushered in.[122]

In Gramsci's opinion, the need for an active and long-term strategy is synonymous with the fact that the revolutionary party has "to be directed towards goals which are concrete and rational."[123] Gramsci's activist stance was in opposition to the view of a majority of the Party's leadership who believed that since a proletarian revolution was inevitable - based on the sheer size of the working class - a policy of active, intimate, and long-term interaction with the masses was unnecessary.

To Gramsci, as part of this need to adopt a long-term approach to building a counter force able to defeat the hegemon, it is imperative that this strategy involve the ideological preparation and political education of the masses in the purpose and objectives of the movement. Many of these factors of preparation and education have already been discussed with reference to both ideology and the role of organic intellectuals. Thus, it was recognized that Gramsci was concerned with the need for "long ideological and political preparation,"[124] and understood the importance of "the permanent discipline of education,"[125] before the actual seizure of power could occur.

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[122]. Hoare and Smith, Introduction in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. lx. In terms of its historical context, it was at the Lyons conference in January 1926 when Gramsci began to forcefully argue that it was time to abandon the idea that state power could be seized via an insurrection - as had happened in Russia - and that instead the focus should be on constructing an active political organization based on a long-term strategy for acquiring power. See Fiori, *Gramsci*, p.203.

[123]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 130.

One final aspect of Gramsci's conception of an active and long-term policy of preparation and education is its need to be pragmatic; in other words, since the concrete reality faced by the party was constantly in flux, the revolutionary movement itself had to be able to adjust to these changing circumstances. Consequently, this ability and willingness to adapt to the requirements of the movement became one of the most important functions of the political education of the masses.[126] In terms of this difficulty confronting the party Gramsci states:

> [S]ince favourable conditions are inevitably going to appear, and since these, in a rather mysterious way, will bring about palingenetic events, it is evident that any deliberate initiative tending to predispose and plan these conditions is not only useless but even harmful.[127]

This is not to suggest, as may appear at first, that political preparation is unnecessary. For Gramsci then states: "An appropriate political initiative is always appropriate..."[128] Instead, it is meant to confirm the central tenet in Gramsci's strategy, that an active and long-term strategy - based on the preparation and education of the masses - is necessary to neutralize the deterministic tendencies of the Communist elite.

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[124]. Ibid., p. 110.

[125]. Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, p. 21.

[126]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 195.

[127]. Ibid., p. 168.

[128]. Ibid., p. 168.

In terms of this process of individual development, it is clear that one of the aims sought through the education and preparation of the masses is to create among the rank and file an appreciation of the concrete situation.[129] However, the leaders themselves had an analytical role to perform, in the sense that a key requirement of the leadership in any revolutionary endeavour involves the ability of that leadership to clearly comprehend the unique national context and the nature of the political struggle itself. According to Showstack Sassoon this involves an intricate knowledge of "the specific configuration of classes confronting it" and "a precise comprehension of the political strategy of its enemy."[130] In other words, it is essential that one 'knows thine enemy' that one is planning to confront.

The ability to comprehend the true nature of the struggle through an understanding of the particulars of one's national context is another crucial element that differentiated Gramsci from both the traditional Marxists and many within his own party. In the mid 1920s the issue of whether the focus of the struggle should be conducted on the international level or at the national stage began to take on a greater relevance after the death of Lenin. His death led to a fundamental split within the world Communist movement between those who advocated the development of communism in one country (Stalin) and those who still supported the view of world-wide or "permanent" revolution (Trotsky). By 1926, Gramsci had come out definitively on the 'national' side by maintaining - during his debates with the 'left' and 'right' wings of the party - that what was most essential to a successful revolutionary movement was a party which was "wholly adapted to the Italian situation."[131]

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[129]. Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, p. 91.

[130]. Showstack Sassoon, "Passive Revolution and the Politics of Reform," pp. 139-140.

While Gramsci recognized that both internal events and global patterns influence the development of a particular state,[132] he believed that long-term international trends tend to manifest differently in each country based on unique national characteristics.[133] Furthermore, the need to develop a coherent strategy in reference to the particulars of each individual state and to gain the support of the masses in that state led Gramsci to emphasize the uniqueness of each country based on its different historical development. Hence:

> In reality, the internal relations of any nation are the result of a combination which is "original" and in a certain sense unique: these relations must be understood and conceived in their originality and uniqueness if one wishes to dominate and direct them.[134]

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[131] Gramsci as quoted by Hoare and Smith. Hoare and Smith, Introduction in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. lix.

[132] Fiori argues that Gramsci continually attempted "to absorb the lessons of Europe and of the Leninist revolution without forgetting for an instant the very different features and problems of his own country." Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci*, p. 114.

[133] Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, p. xiv.

[134] Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 240.

Therefore, Gramsci realized that since the success or failure of a revolutionary movement was dependent on garnering support, and hence, power within a specific state - regardless of a certain ideology's universal pronouncements and world wide orientation - it was the unique features of that state which must be properly understood and conceived.

While Gramsci devoted a significant amount of time to surveying Italian political history in the 19th century,[135] it is clear that his comprehensive examination of the subject had a more contemporary and relevant purpose. For Gramsci, the more immediate problem was the need to arrive at a better understanding of the enemy the Italian Communist Party was now confronting - the Fascist Party under Mussolini - in order to devise the most appropriate strategy to defeat it.[136] Even prior to Gramsci's arrest in 1927, he had appreciated the need to come to a more fundamental understanding of the phenomenon of fascism, in other words, to 'know one's enemy' through an understanding of its origins, its components, and hence, its

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[135]. It is because of his belief in the need to comprehend the national context on which the revolutionary struggle will be fought that Gramsci allots such a great deal of time in focusing on the specific development of Italian history. He gives special attention to the 19th century and the relations between the two principal parties - the Moderate Party (the dominant Party) and its challenger, the Action Party - to emphasize how the Action Party's failure to properly understand its adversary led to its perpetual ineffectiveness. In other words, how the Action Party's inability to understand the hegemonic position of the Moderates led to a misinterpretation of their own role as a counter-hegemonic force. See Gramsci, "Notes on Italian History," in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 52-120.

[136]. According to Showstack Sassoon, the real purpose of Gramsci's writings was not to create a theoretically coherent body of work but involved the practical need to recognize "the full significance and complexity of fascism ... in order to develop an adequate strategy to fight it." Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, p. xiii.

"role as a unifier of the ruling class and an expression of its interests."[137] Thereafter, Gramsci constantly disputed any conception of fascism as a mere reactionary force that would soon lose the support of the petit bourgeoisie, and hence allow the proletariat to take their 'rightful' position as leaders of the State. Gramsci realized that only a proper understanding of the nature of Fascism, and thus the nature of the struggle itself, could turn the party away from simple determinism and truly define the counter-hegemonic party of the working class as an adaptable and active revolutionary force.

It was through this realization that fascism was not simply a reactionary and therefore temporary phenomenon that Gramsci began to coalesce his core beliefs around constructing a revolutionary movement based on an active, deliberate and long-term strategy. This strategy focuses on what Gramsci terms the 'war of position.' Consequently, the first step in this strategy, based on a thorough understanding of the enemy one is confronting, is to create a new counter-hegemonic movement, total and complete in its dialectic opposition to the prevailing hegemon.

Gramsci recognizes that only by separating the revolutionary movement from, and by counterposing it to, the hegemonic power, can the movement then exhibit its essential differences vis-a-vis the dominant mode of thought in society at the time. In this sense, the revolutionary bloc becomes what Gramsci terms a "counter-weight to another conception of the world,"[138] and only when the antithesis posits itself as "the radical antagonist of the thesis" can the tendency toward "its [the hegemon's] complete destruction" occur.[139] It is perhaps in his use of the dialectic that Gramsci most closely approximates the traditional Marxist perspective regarding the growth of the revolutionary movement and, consequently, the development of the historical process itself. As Gramsci asserts:

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[137]. Hoare and Smith, Introduction in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. li and lxxviii.

> The true fundamental function and significance of the dialectic can only be grasped if the philosophy of praxis is conceived as an integral and original philosophy which opens up a new phase of history and a new phase in the development of world thought.[140]

In terms of both theory and practice, it is clear to Gramsci that history does not proceed through an evolutionary process, but instead through a confrontation of opposites.[141] Consequently, it is through his use of the dialectic that Gramsci argues that the working class must "in both its organization and in its moral values ... free itself completely from the bourgeois world."[142] Therefore, it becomes the function of the revolutionary movement not simply to modify the current reality through a series of reforms, but to completely destroy all remnants of the hegemon, most importantly, the hegemonic projection of "common sense."[143] In other words, the movement must seek nothing less than the destruction of the hegemon itself.

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[138]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 157.

[139]. Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci*, p. 240.

[140]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 435.

[141]. Nemeth, *Gramsci's Philosophy*, p. 148.

[142]. Joll, *Gramsci*, p. 54.

In terms of his overall conceptualization of the war of position, Gramsci himself ponders: "[I]s it possible to plough without first manuring the land?"[144] Gramsci recognizes that preparing the ground for revolutionary activity is essential since as he argues "every revolution has been preceded by an intense labour of criticism, by the diffusion of culture and the spread of ideas..."[145] As Femia asserts:

> [D]iffusion and acceptance of radical ideas about man and society, the creation of a proletarian counter-hegemony, is a precondition for revolution. Without prior success in what Gramsci calls the war of position on the cultural front, a seizure of state power would only prove transitory if not disastrous.[146]

As a consequence, it is clear to Gramsci that the first stage of the war of position must involve the dissemination of new ideas by the counter-hegemonic bloc in both intellectually and culturally preparing the ground for the revolutionary force's ascension to hegemonic dominance. It is only by demonstrating to society at large that its conception of the world is fundamentally superior to the current hegemon that such a counter-hegemonic force can conquer civil society and eventually exert its political leadership.[147]

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[143]. See Fiori, *Antonio Gramsci*, p. 244, and Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution*, pp. 151-152.

[144]. Gramsci as quoted by Hoare and Smith. Hoare and Smith, Introduction in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. xciii.

[145]. Gramsci as quoted by Showstack Sassoon. Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, p. 25.

[146]. Femia, "Hegemony and Consciousness in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci," p. 34.

A further purpose behind Gramsci's espousal of a war of position is to emphasize the new circumstances confronting contemporary revolutionary movements in their attempts to seize state power. As previously examined in Gramsci's conceptualization of state and society, the contemporary State can no longer be viewed as a monolithic entity, since it now interacts and intervenes in the very formation and existence of what can be termed civil society. As a consequence, Gramsci argues that

> the State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks: more or less numerous from one State to the next, it goes without saying - but this precisely necessitated an accurate reconnaissance of each individual country.[148]

Gramsci demonstrates how this new configuration of State and society has therefore made the historical materialism as interpreted by 'traditional' Marxists irrelevant. Consequently, the Leninist strategy of frontal attack must be replaced by a long-term strategy because

> in the most advanced States, ... "civil" society has become a very complex structure and one which is resistant to the catastrophic "incursions" of the immediate economic element (crises, depressions, etc.). The superstructures of civil society are like the trench-systems of modern warfare.[149]

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[147]. See Ibid., p. 41, and Buci-Glucksmann, "Hegemony and Consent," p. 120. It is because of this fundamental belief that Gramsci argues: "A social group can, and indeed must, already 'lead' (i.e., be hegemonic) before winning governmental power." Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 47.

[148]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 238.

[149]. Ibid., p. 235.

Therefore, in contemporary states the extension of the superstructure has reinforced the power of the dominant group, and shielded it from the type of crises that the proletariat had hoped would signal the inevitable demise of capitalist rule. For Gramsci, this view of civil society once more supports his belief that only an initial attack on the superstructure of ideas, morals, and culture can provide the context through which the counter-hegemon can eventually achieve State power. For as Gramsci reminds us, "the 'war of position' once won, is decisive definitely."[150]

The final component of Gramsci's 'war of position' relates to the importance of judging that exact moment when the war of position has reached the point in which one must necessarily transform the struggle to one of a 'war of movement.' In other words, one must be aware of the juncture at which the ground has been adequately prepared and the support of civil society sufficiently achieved. At this point, a frontal assault on the State then becomes desirable in terms of bringing the revolutionary movement towards its ultimate aim of capturing political power.

While Gramsci does argue that "the political and the military or the war of position and the war of movement are not two separate moments but part of a single, dialectical process,"[151] it is clear that there must occur a specific moment when the ruling class has reached the point that though it is still dominant (force and coercion), it is no longer hegemonic (ideas and consent).[152] It is at such a crisis point that a power vacuum emerges in which the discredited moral and intellectual leadership of the hegemon leads to a loss of consent, and erosion of support, from the subordinate classes.[153] It is at this moment that a fundamental change occurs in the revolutionary struggle when a war of movement becomes both necessary and desirable.[154] This, in turn, allows an entrenched counter-hegemonic force - if there is one present - to arise and supplant the current hegemon. As Gramsci emphasises, there will occur a time when the war of position "passes over to siege warfare..."[155] Of course, as already demonstrated, this development can only occur after a long and deliberate strategy of active mass participation in which the 'new' ideas of the counter-hegemon have had an opportunity to permeate society. It is only after these aims have initially been achieved that such a 'direct' confrontation with the current hegemon can be successful.

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[150]. Ibid., p. 239.

The final point that needs to be reiterated - which has been touched upon at various points in this chapter - is the degree to which Gramsci's focus on the need for an active strategy was principally a critique of the economism, determinism, and historical materialism he perceived as so harmful to the revolutionary movement. This need to destroy the myth of historical materialism is demonstrated both in the number of times he addresses this problem,[156] and in the ferocity of his attacks. In Gramsci's opinion, the crucial harm is that this perspective promotes a 'wait and see' type attitude, or more appropriately, a 'do nothing' kind of approach. Most of the other members of the Communist elite believed that, since the proletarian revolution would occur sooner or later, there was little the revolutionary leadership could do to hasten this process.[157] For this reason, Gramsci argues that

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[151]. Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, p. 195.

[152]. See Walzer, "The Ambiguous Legacy of Antonio Gramsci," pp. 447-448, and Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution*, p. 225.

[153]. Pellicani, *Gramsci*, p. 33.

[154]. Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, p. 202.

[155]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 239.

> it is essential at all times to demonstrate the futility of mechanical determinism: ... when it is adopted as a thought out and coherent philosophy on the part of the intellectuals, it becomes a cause of passivity, of idiotic self-sufficiency.[158]

In Gramsci's opinion, if a revolutionary movement is to be successful, it must be conceptualized as an active process in which political intervention is essential, and not simply as an evolutionary, and hence, inevitable development.[159] As

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[156]. In fact, Gramsci dedicates an entire section of *The Prison Notebooks* in criticizing Bukharin's *The Popular Manual*. See Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 419-472.

[157]. Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution*, p. 134.

[158]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 337.

[159]. Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, p. 96.

Gramsci stresses throughout *The Prison Notebooks*, only an active, organized, and conscious bloc of individuals - aware of their greater purpose and ultimate aim - can hope to defeat the entrenched power of the hegemon and overthrow the current socio-economic order.

THE RESULT?

The final component of Gramsci's writings to be examined involves the projected shape the future society and state will assume under Gramsci's revolutionary counter-hegemonic bloc. It must be readily admitted that Gramsci spends almost no time on specific elements of his post-revolutionary world. As Joll assesses, this is not that unusual since

> like many revolutionary thinkers, and … like Marx himself, he [Gramsci] was more interested in the long-term process by which the revolution would come about than in what society would look like after the revolution.[160]

More specifically, Gramsci's main focus is on constructing a successful revolutionary movement, and its future composition seemed beyond his current conception. As a consequence:

> In *The Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci was more concerned with analysing the past and the search for historical laws than with prescribing a specific course of action for the future or planning the details of a new society which in the circumstances in which he was living must have seemed very remote.[161]

The only real references Gramsci makes towards this 'future' society are very general, involving the belief that such a society will be based on a 'new' type of culture, morality, and hence, conception of the world. His ideas regarding the need to create a fundamentally new culture - vis-a-vis the common sense world view of the hegemon - were already examined in detail in terms of his views on ideology in general and, more specifically, the role of the organic intellectuals. Consequently, in the end, the only definite characteristic about this 'new' culture appears to be that it will be significantly different from that of the current hegemon. Therefore, according to Gramsci:

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[160]. Joll, *Gramsci*, pp. 110-111.

[161]. Ibid., p. 105.

> The affirmation that the philosophy is a new, independent and original conception, even though it is also a moment of world historical development, is an affirmation of *the independence and originality of a new culture* in incubation, which will develop with the development of social relations.[162]

Even in this context, Gramsci suggests that the form this 'new' culture will assume must be related to the evolution of society after the revolution. Therefore, any attempt to define its precise form in the present will be futile.

At certain times, Gramsci does expound on this new culture the revolution will create, although he tends to conceptualize it in terms of its universal and total form. Gramsci writes of this future as a "struggle for objectivity" and suggests that "this struggle is the same as the struggle for the cultural unification of the human race."[163] At another point in his writings he asserts the need "to diffuse the philosophical innovations which will demonstrate themselves to be

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[162]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 398. (Emphasis added - TJB).

[163]. Ibid., p. 445.

'historically true' to the extent that they become concretely - i.e., historically and socially - universal."[164] In this sense, it would appear that Gramsci is stating that which is true of all ideologies, that there is inherent need - whether it is Marxism, political Islam, or Democratic Capitalism - for a world-wide dominance and totality of form, in other words, it is a need for universal acceptance and, as it were, a monopoly over the 'truth,' while the claimed pursuit of "universal peace" and "absolute justice" become the ideal.[165]

The one goal that Gramsci does specifically address when describing his future society is the idea of "freedom." In a certain sense, the notion of freedom would appear to be the most discernible characteristic of 'man' in the post-revolutionary society. In defining the "freedom" that awaits the human race in this new civilization, Gramsci believes the transition that will occur involves a historical development "characterised by the passage from the reign of necessity to the reign of freedom."[166] While Gramsci does not specify the actual duration of time it will take to achieve this goal of "freedom," he follows Marx's lead in estimating that this future state of man, and hence of society itself, is probably many years away. According to Gramsci:

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[164]. Ibid., p. 348.

[165]. Pellicani, *Gramsci*, p. 81.

[166]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 404. According to Nemeth: "The difference between the two realms lies in Marx's contention that only in that of freedom does man begin to win the struggle to satisfy his needs and wants completely." Nemeth, *Gramsci's Philosophy*, p. 180.

> Marx initiates intellectually an historical epoch which will last in all probability for centuries, that is until the disappearance of political society and the coming of regulated society. Only then will his conception of the world be superseded by the conception of freedom.[167]

The other feature that Gramsci ties into his discussion of freedom in this future society is the notion that "quality" will take precedence over "quantity." Some writers, such as Nemeth, perceive this idea of quality in terms of the utilitarian principle - the greatest happiness for the greatest number - or perhaps more specifically, as an increase in the 'quality' of life enjoyed by the human race (i.e., increased time for leisurely pursuits to satisfy 'man's' talents and desires).[168] It is difficult, however, to ascertain whether Gramsci intends his conception of quality becoming quantity in this way. Instead, it seems that Gramsci is admitting that there is no to predict how the forces of history will evolve in shaping the exact form any future society will assume. As Gramsci readily admits:

> In reality one can "scientifically" foresee only the struggle, but not the concrete moments of the struggle, which cannot but be the results of opposing forces in continuous movement which are never reducible to fixed quantities since within them quantity is continually becoming quality.[169]

For many Marxists, Gramsci's statement is an admission that any prediction of the future form society will assume is impossible. Therefore, far from simply evading this essential question, it is a realization that it is the success or failure of the revolutionary movement, and the developments thereafter, that alone will determine the shape of societal relations, and hence, individual characteristics themselves.[170]

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[167]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 382.

[168]. Nemeth, *Gramsci's Philosophy*, p. 180.

[169]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 438.

The final element of this future civilization, as conceived by Gramsci, involves the role of the State. Gramsci argues, in perhaps as convoluted and confusing a fashion as Marx that the State will simply disappear, or more appropriately, reorganize itself. Yet, in reality, Gramsci has little if anything to say on the specific form this new State will assume.[171] As far as Gramsci is concerned:

> The development of the party into a State reacts upon the party and requires of it a continuous reorganisation and development, just as development of the party and the State into a conception of the world, i.e., into a total and molecular (individual) transformation of ways of thinking and acting, reacts upon the State and the party, compelling them to reorganize continually and confronting them with new and original problems to solve.[172]

Once more, Gramsci seems to be suggesting that the form the future State will achieve depends on the type of problems it will confront. Therefore, since we can not truly assess these future problems, we are unable to predict the shape or constitution of this State. Consequently, the ideal becomes the goal of the future State as it aims to solve the practical problems of society on the foundations of a more moral, just, and equal society.

As Gramsci understood, the only logical conclusion to this evolution of society must be the end of the State itself. As he argues: "...it is only possible to create a system of principles asserting that the State's goal is its own end, its own disappearance, in other words the reabsorption of political society into civil society."[173] When one links this withering of the State (i.e., State-like institutions?) to Gramsci's promotion of a universal culture or morality, his conception of the future is similar to the type of world professed by all ideologies. The result is a world ruled by one dominant power, hegemonic in form and ideas, and providing the moral foundations on which the perfect society can be constructed.

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[170]. As demonstrated above, even 'human nature' itself is impossible to predict since it will be shaped by future societal relations that currently cannot be foreseen.

[171]. Showstack Sassoon, *Gramsci's Politics*, p. 227.

[172]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 267.

In his examination of Gramsci's future State, Pellicani argues that far from disappearing or withering away, the State cannot help but become everything, totalitarian in form and omnipotent in persuasion. According to Pellicani: "The paradox of communism is that in the name of destroying the State everything is done to make the State the sole regulator of individual and collective human life."[174] In the end, what seems most important for the victor is the exercise of power itself, and concurrently, its ability to defend itself against the next counter-hegemonic force on the 'bloc.'

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[173]. Ibid., p. 253.

[174]. Pellicani, *Gramsci*, p. 10. Also see pp. 58, 86, and 89.

CHAPTER IV: MUHAMMAD AND HIS TIMES

The impact the Prophet Muhammad has upon modern political Islamic movements is clearly profound. For contemporary Islamists, Muhammad provides both the model of the ideal leader and the example of a successful revolutionary. As a model for future generations to emulate, the Prophet is perceived as embodying all those characteristics and human attributes necessary for any great leader. In combining the qualities of both theorist and practitioner, Muhammad is perceived as an individual divinely blessed with both nobility of character and exceptionally high moral standards. Muhammad combined the heart of a religious teacher, the mind of an adroit politician, and the physical attributes of a skilled military tactician. The relevance of the Prophet's character for contemporary Muslims, all Muslims and not just the "fundamentalists," is perhaps most clearly demonstrated by the fact that even his most minute sayings and deeds - the 'Sunnah' - are still followed by ordinary Muslims nearly 1400 years after his death.[1]

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[1] James E. Royster gives the best explanation on how Muhammad was able to combine both word and deed through his teachings and actions thus forming "... a perfect code of thought and conduct that shall remain in effect until the end of time." See James E. Royster, "Muhammad as Teacher and Exemplar," *The Muslim World* 68, no.4 (October 1978): 235-258, especially, p. 235.

In this chapter, an examination of Muhammad and his relevance to the study of contemporary Islamic movements will be conducted. This section will primarily be concerned with examining Muhammad's achievements and his development as a revolutionary within the Gramscian theoretical framework developed in the last chapter. In Chapter 3, it was argued that Gramsci's overarching aim was to construct a viable counter-hegemonic force. By demonstrating that Muhammad's aims were identical to those of Gramsci, it will be shown that Muhammad too was concerned with analysing and conceptualizing the society he lived in and the dominant forces he confronted. Like Gramsci, Muhammad also realized that only through a coherent ideology, unified organization, and a long-term strategy could he and his followers hope to defeat the current hegemon and substitute a new and fundamentally different system.

The central aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that regardless of the spatial and temporal differences that exist between Muhammad and Gramsci, and the religious context of the Islamic message, the early growth and expansion of the Islamic movement under Muhammad very much adheres to the pattern for a successful counter-hegemonic force conceptualized by Gramsci. Since contemporary Islamists utilize Muhammad as the ideal and the example to be pursued, this chapter will illustrate, along with the modern case of Hamas in Palestine in Chapter 5, that

Gramsci's framework remains the most appropriate method through which to understand the current phenomenon of political Islam. Like Muhammad and Gramsci, the modern Islamists may proclaim their message in moral absolutes through a desire to aspire to some higher ideal, but essentially their overriding practical aim is the seizure of power for its own sake, and the overthrow of the contemporary social, political, and economic order.

MUHAMMAD'S CONSTRUCTION OF THE COUNTER-HEGEMONIC BLOC

MUHAMMAD'S CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SOCIETY AND STATE

It is clear that in his construction of a counter-hegemonic bloc,[2] Muhammad's primary aims were very similar to those sought by Gramsci. As was the case with Gramsci, Muhammad realized that the first priority was the need to attain a more comprehensive understanding of the society and state he was attempting to both transform and overthrow. Many may argue that "the state" at the time of Muhammad was not the all-encompassing entity it would later become during Gramsci's lifetime. Yet, it will be argued that it was through the Qurayshi tribe's dominance of the economic structure, coupled with the superstructure of idolatry, that they were able to exert a state-like influence over the less powerful members of society.

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[2]. In this sense, one can also use the term "active revolutionary force."

In terms of 'civil' society, Gramsci maintains that the first element in building a counter-hegemonic bloc is to develop a clear and comprehensive understanding of one's own society, the role of the individual, and the relationship between the two. In addition, for any message, or a counter-hegemonic ideology, to be successful, there must be a receptive audience willing to accept such an alternative view.[3] Muhammad was quite aware of the 'ills' affecting Meccan society at his time. The rapid commercial growth of Mecca had quickly transformed Meccan society from a nomadic one - or peasant society - to one in which there now existed an ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor, between the influential and their dependants. Many members of Meccan society had grown disenchanted with the business-oriented direction of the elites, and were searching for a new spiritual and political solution to their contemporary problems.[4] In this new atmosphere of 'cut-throat capitalism' and 'high finance,' it is not surprising that those members of society most detrimentally affected by rapid economic development should attempt to discover an alternative system that would not only instil them with a newfound 'faith,' but also provide these potential 'believers' with the opportunity to acquire a bigger and more equitable share of the economic 'spoils.'

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[3]. As Gramsci states: "No mass action is possible unless the mass itself is convinced of the ends it wants to reach and the methods to be applied." Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, p. 36.

[4]. See Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A Biography of the Prophet* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), p. 68, and John Bagot Glubb, *The Life and Times of Muhammad* (New York: Stein and Day, 1970), p. 81.

As Gramsci argues, for any counter-hegemonic force to gain acceptance in the society at large it must first address the individual in its most rudimentary form, in terms of human nature. In Chapter 3 it was demonstrated that all the principal philosophers of history have understood that every conceptualization of the individual must involve the natural tendencies of the individual and a person's intimate relationship to one's environment. In its most basic form, the dichotomy between Hobbes and Rousseau was created through their profession of either the inherent evil or goodness of the individual human being. Yet Gramsci, and previously Marx, did not view human nature in such absolutist terms. Instead, they argued that 'man' was neither inherently good nor evil, but as a result of the 'complex of social relations,' man was both malleable and prone to change.[5]

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[5]. See Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 133 and 355.

Maxime Rodinson understands that human nature represents the fundamental basis of a true comprehension of Islam as well. He believes that in this fashion, Islam was similar to most revolutionary movements that have occurred throughout history. According to Rodinson:

> There are constants - one might even say laws - that govern this type of movement. They have their basis at least at a particular stage of development, in the nature of human societies, and beyond that, in the character of *human nature* itself.[6]

Thus, it is only by initially arriving at a clear conceptualization of human nature, one which does not adhere to some fixed belief, that a revolutionary movement can succeed in both understanding the problems of society and, hence, the method in which these difficulties can and must be overcome. In other words, for any revolutionary movement to be successful, it must try to transform the very nature of its followers.

In Gramsci's conceptualization of society, it is clear that the individual must be the principal unit of analysis for any counter-hegemonic force attempting to convey its message. As examined in Chapter 3, Gramsci's elevation of the role of the individual was in fact one of the principal factors that differentiated him from earlier Marxist revolutionary thinkers who viewed the masses in a more strictly instrumental fashion.

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[6]. Maxime Rodinson, *Muhammad* (Translated by Anne Carter) (New York: Random House, 1980), p. x. (Emphasis added - TJB).

To Gramsci, his view meant that the preparation, education, and participation of each individual is imperative in the creation of a counter-hegemonic bloc.[7]

Muhammad too realized that it was the individual - his beliefs and his actions - that formed the essential foundation of a revolutionary organization able to promote its own alternative conception of the world. W. Montgomery Watt argues that Muhammad was keenly aware of the enhanced individualism of his time and made a specific point of addressing the new role of the individual in the rapidly emerging society of early seventh century Mecca.[8] This new individualism was clearly related to changing circumstances as rapid economic development had led to the destruction of the old communal ethics (i.e., the Arab code of honour) and the ancient tribal system dominant prior to this time.[9]

In many ways, the early success of Islam was rooted in its willingness and ability to stress the inherent value of each person and the fundamental equality of all humanity. For Muhammad, from the earliest revelations of the Koran, the paramount position allotted to the individual was undeniable. According to Watt:

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[7]. See Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 9 and 347.

[8]. W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 19.

[9]. See Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca*, p. 19, and Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 67.

> Man's consciousness of himself as an individual had come to stay, and therefore had to be accepted and to be taken into account. This the Quran does in the conception of the Last Judgement, for that is essentially a judgement on individuals.[10]

Syed Asad Gilani concurs with Watt regarding Islam's primary focus on the individual, and the central position each individual assumed within the early Islamic movement:

> Arrangements of accountability, reward and punishment, paradise and hell were made for the individual ... Islam's total endeavours are focused on the reformation of the individual.[11]

In this sense, the Koran goes to great lengths to stress the power the individual possesses through his own actions and recognizes that he, and only he, has the ability to shape his own destiny - though the role of God (*Allah*) of course remains determinant.[12]

The other segment of society which both Muhammad and Gramsci examine is the group. In this sense, both sought the support of that 'group of people' most inclined to back a new counter-hegemonic bloc. Earlier, it was examined how Gramsci's work in this area differentiated his views from those of earlier Marxists, since Gramsci was not interested strictly in groups as defined by their economic class (e.g., the proletariat). The same is true of Muhammad. While general similarities in the socio-economic status of the earliest Muslims demonstrate that economic factors did have an influence on a particular individual's decision whether or not to follow Islam, it was by no means the only factor. As Watt points out, one of the groups to embrace Islam most enthusiastically was young men from influential families.[13] In addition, Abu Bakr - perhaps the first person to accept Islam outside of the Prophet's own family - was a wealthy merchant.[14]

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[10]. W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad At Medina* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), p. 73.

[11]. Syed Asad Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution* (Lahore: Ferozsons, 1989), p. 50. Gilani also makes the point that the success of the Holy Prophet's revolution was based on the fact that he realized the primary requirement involved the need "to bring about a moral revolution in an individual and transform him." p. 49.

[12]. Some such examples of this type of reasserted individualism include the following: "On the Day of Resurrection neither your kinsfolk nor your children shall avail you. God will separate you. He is cognizant of all your actions." *The Koran*, 66:3. "[T]hat no soul shall bear another's burden, and that each man shall be judged by his own labours; that his labours shall be scrutinized, and that he shall be justly requited for them..." *The Koran*, 53:42. There are many other examples throughout the Koran that reiterate the view of this new individualism which had taken root in society, and consequently, helped to enhance the role of the individual within Muhammad's infant movement.

There are many factors that account for an individual's decision to support a counter-hegemonic bloc; they cannot be simply reduced to economics. On the one hand, there is the more abstract idea of pride or prestige. On the other hand, there is a shared belief or perception of the world. In addition, individuals may look beyond mere economic interests as day-to-day survival becomes less immediate. As the search begins for greater meaning in life, this can then lead to increased feelings of 'spiritual' inadequacy. Watt addresses the ideological and spiritual 'vacuum,' or more specifically the 'loss of faith,' that existed by the end of the sixth century with the growth of capitalist society.[15] According to Watt:

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[13]. W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 36.

[14]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 104.

> In the rise of Mecca to wealth and power we have a movement from a nomadic economy to a mercantile and capitalist economy. By the time of Muhammad, however, there had been no readjustment of the social, moral, intellectual, and religious attitudes of the community.[16]

This spiritual/religious/cultural lacuna was an important element to which Muhammad's message forcefully appealed. In the end, as Gramsci asserts in his definition of a group, "It is not 'thought' but what people really think that unites or differentiates mankind."[17] This was clearly true at the time of Muhammad and remains relevant within contemporary Muslim societies. For the Islamists still divide the world into groups defined by the 'believers' versus 'non believers,' into Islam versus *jahiliyyah*.

In Muhammad's conceptualization of the State, the Quraysh represented the formidable hegemon to be defeated in much the same way as Mussolini was for Gramsci, or Nasser for Qutb. It is clear that Muhammad did not conceptualize the seventh century Meccan 'State' to the same extent as Gramsci did in the 1920s, or differentiate between the State and civil society to the same degree.[18] But Muhammad clearly understood that the elite of the Qurayshi tribe was the dominant force, not just in Mecca, but in all of Central Arabia. He also realized that only a complete and thorough knowledge of their power - as exercised through the economic structure and ideological superstructure - would allow the Islamic movement the opportunity to defeat them. By 'knowing thine enemy,' like Gramsci, Muhammad realized the necessity of first conceptualizing the hegemonic relationship before one could hope to take the lead role in its destruction.

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[15]. Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca*, p. 28.

[16]. Ibid., p. 19.

[17]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 355.

In the case of the hegemonic power of the Quraysh, it is clear that their economic dominance and their use of the pagan belief system helped to reinforce their political control over society as a whole. According to Armstrong, the Quraysh exerted power both explicitly and implicitly over their Meccan brethren.

> The tribe of Quraysh ... had been responsible for the commercial success of Mecca and they knew that a great deal of their prestige among the other Arab tribes was due to the fact that they had the great privilege of guarding the huge granite shrine [the Kabah] and ensuring that its sanctities were preserved.[19]

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[18]. Perhaps there is no differentiation in the latter case, as Gramsci readily admitted was true for Russia in the early twentieth century.

[19]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 45. Also see Glubb, *The Life and Times of Muhammad*, p. 61.

Through their economic and ideological influence the elites reinforced their authority and hegemony over society by also dominating the political structures of Mecca. At the time, the political decisions of Mecca were made by the *mala*, which was an assembly composed of the chiefs and other notables of the principal clans of the city.[20] Not unexpectedly, most of the members of this group were also among the top merchants of Mecca who needed the commercial and ideological benefits of the Kabah to reinforce their political domination over society. In this regard, Watt states that "a great part of the strength of Mecca lay in the ability of its leaders to form a common mind and to soft-pedal petty rivalries for the sake of the common good."[21] These comments demonstrate not only the influence and power of the ruling elite, but also their desire to promote a type of 'common sense' perspective through which support was created for certain policies deemed to be for the 'good' of the common Meccans, but which unquestionably worked to the principal benefit of the elites themselves.

It was because the elites of the Quraysh tribe commanded such a hegemonic and privileged position that they were the first to promote a more active opposition to Muhammad's preaching in approximately 615, nearly five years after

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[20]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 41. Also see Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca*, p. 8.

[21]. Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca*, p. 8.

Muhammad had received his first revelation.[22] Similar to other hegemonic powers, the Quraysh were initially willing to allow a certain amount of vocal dissent. Yet, when that opposition was perceived to be jeopardizing the very basis of their political legitimacy, through an attack on the source of their wealth (the economic base) and the ideological superstructure that supported it (the Kabah), it was then the Quraysh began to more forcefully oppose Muhammad's movement. According to Guillaume:

> Parties who enjoy financial, ecclesiastical, and social advantages from an established religion will not forego those privileges without a struggle and in the last resort are prepared to kill the man who attacks them. From the Quran one can see the very real fear of the Meccans that the destruction of the gods would lead to their downfall.[23]

Glubb concurs with this view regarding the threat that the Quraysh felt Muhammad now posed to their privileged positions.

> The prestige of the Quraish and the financial success of the fairs accompanying the pilgrimage depended on the public

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[22]. The one event that seems to have most adamantly turned the Quraysh tribe against Muhammad is the incident of the 'Satanic Verses.' Briefly, in reference to this event, it appears that prior to this time Muhammad was willing to make some sort of compromise with the leading men of Mecca by accepting their idols as 'equals' to his own God. In support of this position a revelation came from God declaring: "Have you thought on Al-Lat and Al-Uzza, and on Manat, the third other?" *The Koran 53:18*. However, when Muhammad realized the implications that such a pronouncement would have on Islam's principal message in One God, a further revelation appeared from Gabriel stating: "Never have we sent a single prophet or apostle before you with whose wishes Satan did not tamper. But God abrogates the interjections of Satan and confirms his own revelations." *The Koran 22:51*. After this point, the Meccan idols were no longer lesser celestial beings, but were now powerless, unable to intercede on man's behalf. This event represented Muhammad's final break with polytheism, and demonstrated the futility of any future deal between Muhammad and the hegemonic Quraysh. For the best explanation of the 'Satanic Verses' see Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca*, pp. 100-109.

[23]. Alfred Guillaume, *Islam* (London: D.C. Heath, 1954), p. 33.

> veneration for the temple. To destroy the reputation of the Kaab for sanctity would be to strike at the very root of the power and prosperity of Quraish.[24]

Clearly, the Quraysh perceived the threat of Muhammad, not in terms of his religious message, but through his ideological pronouncements and the economic repercussions such ideas could entail. It is at this juncture that the Qurayshi elites began to rally the masses against this 'revolutionary' movement, and the destabilizing practices of Muhammad and his followers. According to Haykal:

> The man of political power and the man of social prestige stand here on a par with the capitalist: In their enmity to everything new and fearful, they mobilize the masses on whom their wealth, social prestige, or power depend against the innovator. This mobilization of the masses is carried out under an appeal to save the sanctity of the old order which may very well have become corrupt, obsolete, and spiritless. They present the old order they seek to save in great monuments of stone designed to delude the innocent rank and file.[25]

These very words could have been written by Gramsci himself. For they recognize the point in the confrontation where the clash of views leads to the development of an open conflict, or a 'war of position,' between the ruling hegemon and its 'common sense' conceptions and the dynamic ideas of its new competitor. Consequently, both seek to extend their influence over the hearts and minds of the masses each is seeking to 'save.'

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[24]. Glubb, *The Life and Times of Muhammad*, p. 108. Also see H. A. R. Gibb, *Islam: An Historical Survey* 2nd Ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 26.

[25]. Muhammad Husein Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad* (London: Shorouk International, 1983), p. 123.

In Gramsci's writings, the actual dominance of the hegemon is based on the relationship between the structure (economic base) and the superstructure (ideology of the ruling class), and these two levels interact in permitting the hegemonic elite to dominate society through its creation of an historic bloc. In other words, trade and finance provided the structure upon which the Quraysh tribe built their power. Yet, it was the fact that the Kabah - as the cultural and religious centre of Arabia - was situated in Mecca that provided the Quraysh with an ideological superstructure within which to support their hegemonic position as the dominant economic group in Central Arabia.[26]

However, by the time of Muhammad, it is clear that there had developed a certain divergence between the prevailing ideas of the time and the new economic environment. According to Watt:

> [T]he trouble was the outcome of man's failure to adjust himself to the economic change because of certain pre-existing attitudes. The new economic circumstances lead ... to an individualism in social affairs without a new moral ideal to balance it, and without a new religious outlook to give the individual significance.[27]

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[26]. Glubb, *The Life and Times of Muhammad*, p. 61.

[27]. Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca*, p. 79.

As Gramsci demonstrated (see chapter 3) this could be described as the juncture where the superstructure, or the ideological representation of the structure or economic base, had not yet adapted to the realities of the new economic environment. In other words, the superstructure had failed to keep pace with the new individualism created by rapid economic development. This separation of structure and superstructure represented that juncture where a new superstructure - or ideological force - could appear and supplant the dominant ideology of the time that had, in many ways, become obsolete and irrelevant to the real needs of the people.[28] Watt recognizes what could be best described as the 'ideological vacuum' that Meccan society was experiencing at this time, when he states:

> [I]n the religious situation of Arabia, and particularly of Mecca, as it was at the end of the sixth century, there must have been many serious-minded men who were aware of a vacuum and eager to find something to satisfy their deepest needs.[29]

In Gramsci's opinion, it is the analysis and comprehension of this divergence - between structure and superstructure - and the ability to predict when it will occur that provides the overriding rationale for understanding the true relationship between these two structural forces. Therefore, according to Gramsci:

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[28] Once more, the position of the Nasser regime in the immediate wake of the Six-Day War offers the best contemporary example of such an instance (see Chapter 2).

[29] Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca*, p. 28.

> It is the problem of the relations between structure and superstructure which must be accurately posed and resolved if the forces which are active in the history of a particular period are to be correctly analyzed, and the relation between them determined.[30]

More importantly, though

> it is precisely the study of these 'intervals' [breaks between structure and superstructure] of varying frequency which enables one to reconstruct the relations on the one hand between structure and superstructure, and the other between the development of organic movement and the conjunctional movement in the structure.[31]

As was examined above, Muhammad was very aware of the social and religious malaise affecting his society. He also understood that the economic success of the Meccan ruling class significantly depended on the continued dominance of the pagan ideologies, but that their economic position itself remained too strong to be directly attacked. Therefore, the weakness of their hegemonic position was rooted in their outdated ideologies and moral beliefs and the desire for spiritual awakening in a large segment of the population. As was demonstrated in Chapter 3, Gramsci's view of the determining nature of ideas - the superstructure - was one factor that differentiated him from his fellow Marxists who believed that 'economics determines everything.' For Muhammad and his followers, while many of their grievances may have been rooted in the economic environment of the time, it was on the level of the superstructure that the hegemon was most vulnerable, and consequently, where they needed to strike if they were to be successful in their quest for political power. By recognizing this lofty desire for spiritual change Muhammad was ready to launch a revolutionary movement that, above all else, demanded the personal and spiritual reformation of each individual. Consequently, it was only once this was accomplished, that a more just and equitable redistribution of finite resources - both economic and political - could be sought.

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[30]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 177.

[31]. Ibid., p. 180.

IDEOLOGY

In creating a counter-hegemonic bloc powerful enough to confront the current hegemon, it is necessary to construct a clear, coherent, and unified ideological movement, fundamentally separate and distinct from one's opponent. While it can be argued that Islam was primarily a religious movement in every sense of the word, it was also an ideological movement that was truly revolutionary in nature. This of course is not meant to take away from either the sincerity of the Islamic message or the belief Muhammad had in the true worth of his cause. What it does imply, though, is that through his words and deeds, Muhammad established an ideologically revolutionary movement whose ultimate objective was the overthrow of the existing socio-economic order. As the Koran itself states in its justification of social, and hence political, revolution:

> **The unbelievers expend their riches in debarring others from the path of God. Thus they dissipate their wealth; but they shall rue it, and in the end be *overthrown*.**[32]

In examining the relevance of Islam as a 'political' ideology, it is clear that its ideological component was based on two distinct factors. The first element was that Islam attempted to distinguish itself from the mainstream views of the time. The second feature was that it involved a specific perception of the world, by projecting how certain individuals understood their environment and their 'ideal' relationship towards it. In addition, Islam was ideological in terms of how individual members of the movement were to interact with each other (i.e., ideological unity).[33] It is not surprising that Maxime Rodinson's investigation of the Prophet - from a decidedly Marxist and secular viewpoint - assumes the strongest position regarding Islam's essentially ideological character. According to Rodinson:

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[32]. *The Koran*, 8:36. (Emphasis added - TJB).

[33]. Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, pp. 32-33.

> What is essential, from the sociological point of view, is that Islam, like every other ideological movement, created on the one hand a new community which endows its members with a distinct identity and, on the other hand, a specific ideology, a cluster of ideas which project an ideal society.[34]

Rodinson extends this idea by asserting that in fact all religious movements based on prophecy are ideological movements. In Rodinson's opinion, all prophecies are "messages that aim to guide great masses within the framework of ideological organizations."[35]

The other principal feature inherent in early Islam, touched upon in the introduction to this section, was the fact that Islam - as both an ideology and a movement - was truly revolutionary in nature. It sought not just to reform the individual, but also to overthrow the existing system and replace it with a fundamentally different moral, social, economic, and political structure. In this sense, the changes sought were to be comprehensive, complete, and universal.[36] In relation to our investigation of Gramsci, it is clear that Muhammad too set forth his thoughts and deeds as a guide to revolutionary action. This was true from the very beginning of Muhammad's call (610) and the acceptance of his new role as Prophet. According to Rodinson, from the start: "He [Muhammad] was to identify himself with the victims of society and make their suffering his own ... Muhammad's attitude was therefore implicitly a revolutionary one."[37] In terms of the beliefs of his movement, Muhammad portrayed a fundamentally different way of conceiving the world while seeking to radically transform the values and mores on which Meccan society was founded.[38] On a practical level, his movement sought revolutionary changes to the way the Meccans had been conducting their business. His movement desired not only a reform of the system, but the overthrow of the present power structure and with it the destruction of the ruling elites' current privileged position.

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[34]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. xix.

[35]. Ibid., p. xlvii.

[36]. Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, p. 221.

From the aforementioned discussion of Muhammad's explicitly revolutionary strategy, it should once more be stated that this is not meant to infer that Muhammad did not believe in the truly religious nature of his movement or the justness of his cause. In fact, as will be examined below, the conviction and dedication of both the leaders and followers of any movement is essential to its success. For it is only an unwavering belief in the righteousness of one's cause that compels an individual to willingly encounter all sorts of deprivation in search of victory. D. M. Dunlop concurs with this view when he states:

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[37]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 82.

[38]. Caesar E. Farah, *Islam: Beliefs and Observances* (Woodbury: Barron's Educational Series, 1968), p. 61.

> Whether the preaching of Islam was for the permanent good of mankind is another matter, but like other successful propagators of a revolutionary creed, Muhammad undoubtably believed in what he professed.[39]

In fact, the greatest confirmation that Muhammad's revolutionary aims were in no way mutually exclusive from his religious beliefs and sincerity is demonstrated by Haykal, who, as a devout Muslim stresses the inherently revolutionary nature of Muhammad's organization and its message.

> There is no doubt that the whole matter between Muhammad and his companions was one of a strong revolution led by Muhammad against idolatry and its adherents. It was a revolution that started in Mecca where Muhammad and his companions were subjected to all kinds of suffering for thirteen long years. Thereafter, the Muslims migrated to Medina and there organized themselves and built up their strength under revolutionary principles dominating the scene... The Muslim's emigration to Medina, the peace they had concluded with the Jews [early Medinan period], all the skirmishes preceding the battle of Badr, as well as the battle of Badr itself - *all these were steps in the general plan of revolution.*[40]

Therefore, it seems clear that Muhammad, his ideology, organization, and strategy were all similar in structure to Gramsci. The ultimate objective for both was the construction of a counter-hegemonic force imbued with the necessary guidelines for successful revolutionary action.

The establishment of Islam, as both an ideological movement and one rooted in the revolutionary actions of its followers, demonstrates how Muhammad realized that for any revolutionary movement to be successful it was imperative to link word with deed. In other words, thought and action, theory and practice, must be intimately interconnected in creating a counter-hegemonic bloc able to confront the ruling power.[41] These two elements were necessarily complementary, and existed at all times side by side. In terms of Muhammad's own role, Rodinson explains: "Sometimes the ideologist or the religious leader has to run in harness with the man of action familiar with the difficult art of manipulating people and making things happen."[42] Thus, both theorist and practitioner must necessarily become one in creating not just ideologies, but ideologies of movement.

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[39]. D.M. Dunlop, *Arab Civilization to A.D. 1500* (London: Longman, 1971), p. 11.

[40]. Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 238. (Emphasis added - TJB).

However, in the opinion of some Islamic scholars the link between theory and practice proceeds less in tandem than by the fact that over time one - thought - must naturally acquiesce to the other - action - if the revolutionary movement is to succeed. In a sense, as Gramsci argues, it is the point where the war of position gives way to the war of movement. In Islam, as will be demonstrated below, it is clear that this transition occurred shortly after the *Hijrah*, or Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina in 622. It was at this point that Muhammad's preachings were turned into action and the Muslim community was transformed from theory or an ideal into practice.[43] In terms of his relations with the Quraysh in Mecca it was also the moment where the two parties had evolved from simply a war of words to a full-fledged military confrontation.[44]

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[41]. See Royster, "Muhammad as Teacher and Exemplar," pp. 235-258.

[42]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, pp. 215-216.

While the relationship between the theoretical and practical elements of a counter-hegemonic ideology are essential components of Gramsci's revolutionary theory, he also argues that the initial role of an ideology must be one of self-criticism. For Gramsci, this critical self-evaluation must have as its primary goal the changing of individual consciousness by forcing the individuals to realize that their self-interests differ from those which they have been led to believe by the dominant powers. This leads to Gramsci's criticism of 'common sense.' It is also at this point that Gramsci links his views on this subject to both the hegemonic struggle and the relationship between theory and practice.[45]

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[43]. For, as Gramsci most succinctly stated: "Given a certain theoretical position one can organise the practical element which is essential for the theory to be realised." Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 365. In terms of Muhammad's Islamic movement, this is exactly what he did when he organized the Islamic community (*ummah*) using religious ties to replace the bonds of blood that had formerly been the basis of solidarity. In effect, at Medina, Muhammad put into practice the holy words and ideas of the previous thirteen years. Also see Gibb, *Islam*, p. 27.

[44]. Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 216.

[45]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 333.

It is clear that a change of consciousness was a fundamental requirement for the earliest converts to Islam. In fact, it seems that Muhammad himself first had to change his own consciousness before he could embark on his prophetic vocation.[46] In describing this early metamorphosis undergone by Muhammad, Armstrong states:

> Muhammad had somehow broken through to a new level of consciousness, where he could recognize what had gone wrong in his society and was little by little providing the Arabs with their own special solution.[47]

Thus, Muhammad appeared to be one of those few gifted individuals, the type sought by Gramsci or Qutb, who could actually separate himself from his surroundings and the common sense/*jahiliyyah* world in which he lived.

Of course, it must be remembered that the ultimate aim sought through changing the consciousness of the individual was to make that person realize that he/she were being misled by the ruling elite, by society, and by the 'common sense' beliefs of the time into misinterpreting one's own true self-interests. While to Gramsci these self-interests are based primarily on economic and social matters, for Muhammad, they must be viewed as essentially religious in nature. Therefore, it was within the religious or spiritual realm that an altering of consciousness first had to appear. This change would revolve around the one fundamental difference between Muhammad and the hegemonic Quraysh - did there exist many Gods as proclaimed by the pagan Quraysh or only one supreme and omnipotent God as asserted by Muhammad? As Armstrong explains:

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[46]. It must be remembered that Gramsci argues that this change of consciousness can actually originate within one individual and eventually spread to the population at large. According to Gramsci: "Should this will be represented by a single individual, its rationality will be documented by the fact that it comes to be accepted by the many, and accepted permanently: That is by becoming a culture, a form of 'good sense,' a conception of the world with an ethic that conforms to its structure." Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 345-346. This is clearly what occurred in the case of Muhammad and the growth of his Islamic movement.

[47]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 86.

> When he [Muhammad] demanded that the people of Mecca worship al-Lah alone and abandon the worship of other Gods, Muhammad was asking them to adopt an entirely new religious attitude that many of his fellow-tribesmen were not ready to accept. We have seen that the monotheistic creed did not merely require an intellectual assent but a change of consciousness.[48]

She is even more succinct at another point regarding the radical implications of accepting this belief in the essential unity and oneness of God. According to Armstrong: "To proclaim belief in only one God was not a mere notional, cerebral assent. It demanded a change of consciousness."[49] The need to first transform the consciousness of the individual, and its representation as the initial stage in the construction of the counter-hegemonic bloc, is probably best alluded to in the Koran itself. For it is the Koran that states: "God does not change a people's lot unless they change what is in their hearts."[50] Thus, ideology must first initiate personal and individual reformation and conviction - a change of consciousness - before the revolutionary process can commence.

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[48]. Ibid., p. 109.

[49]. Ibid., p. 52.

While a crucial aim of ideology is to initiate a critical evaluation of oneself and the individual's overall relationship to society, as Gramsci explains, the role of ideology and the organic intellectual (Chapter 3) is also related to the necessity of founding a fundamentally new type of State/morality/culture. According to Gramsci, a counter-hegemonic ideology must be able to bring "into being a new form of State," "construct a new intellectual and moral order," and create "a new type of society."[51] Clearly, Muhammad and the Islamic ideology he promulgated achieved all these aims in their emergence as a truly hegemonic system.

As was demonstrated above in relation to the requirements for a change of consciousness, it was Muhammad's declaration of the idea of monotheism or 'One God' that defined all subsequent Islamic conceptions of the world. Whether they be the early Koranic ideas involving Judgement Day, prayer, the giving of alms, or the Koran's fervent denunciations of material gain for its own sake, all these notions were linked with the overarching belief in the existence of one supreme and omnipotent God who created everything and to which all will return on the Day of Resurrection. According to Rodinson:

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[50]. *The Koran*, 13:11.

[51]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 388.

> Muhammad succeeded first in getting his community to adopt fundamental ideas that organized his conception of the world - *the oneness of God*, above all - and the cultural values and practices associated with them.[52]

This new and fundamentally different conception of the world formed the very basis of the new type of State/morality/culture sought by the early Islamic movement.

In addition, as Gramsci asserts, every new revolutionary force must present its own conception of the world and the type of state it hopes to create primarily through its opposition to the ruling hegemon. Clearly, the early Islamic movement defined its very existence through this ability to project a counter conception of the world (i.e., reality). As Rodinson recognizes:

> The group had to distinguish itself clearly from everything outside itself. To do that, it first had to have its own clearly defined ideology. Essentially this was based on divine unity [One God].[53]

Thus, from the very beginning the primary role performed by this entirely novel conception of the world was to separate the new and dynamic views of Islam from the archaic and superstition-based beliefs of the ruling Quraysh. In the process, it was hoped that all elements of the current structure would be destroyed, allowing the Islamic ideology to build the foundations for the emergence of a radically new system, a new civilization, and consequently, a new type of man.[54]

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[52]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. xxxiv. (Emphasis added - TJB).

[53]. Ibid., p. 118.

If an ideology seeks to found a new type of state by separating and differentiating its ideology from that of the ruling hegemon, then the counter-hegemon must promote its ideas as a total system, able to provide the solutions necessary for all areas of life. In Chapter 1, it was demonstrated how the totality of Islam forms one of the core doctrines of contemporary political Islam. This belief in its totality and its ability to guide not just the religious aspects of its followers, but also their social, economic, and political lives is based on the early experiences of Muhammad in Mecca and Medina. This is especially true in Medina, where Muhammad found himself not just a religious teacher, but also a political leader, a social reformer, a military general, and a judge.[55]

It is not uncommon for ideologies to claim a total understanding and conception of the world and a complete knowledge of all relationships contained within such a system. In fact, one could argue that such a feature is inherent to all ideologies. For most ideologies profess a type of absoluteness as the possessors of all the solutions (i.e., the truth) required to address the complex realities of the world. Gramsci takes such a stance when he argues that

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[54] For some examples see Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, pp. 112, 116, 163, and 223.

[55] M.A. Rauf, *A Brief History of Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 16.

> the philosophy of praxis is sufficient unto itself, that it contains in itself all the fundamental elements needed to construct a total and integral conception of the world, a total philosophy ... a total integral civilization.[56]

Yet, while Gramsci sought to elevate Marxism to this plateau in theory and asserted that it had "no need of support from alien sources,"[57] Muhammad was able to create, in practice, such a society, based on a clear, coherent, and all-embracing ideology.

The totality of Islam, or perhaps more appropriately, its 'totalitarian' nature, is assessed by several scholars, in both its theoretical form and in its practical application to the real world. According to Maulana Muhammad Ali: "It is thus obvious that the Prophet's teachings were all-comprehensive and were calculated to bring about all-round development of man's faculties."[58] Haykal examines the totality of Islam as it applied to the practical environment. "Muhammad elaborated a complete system of rules for the guidance of man, state, and society, which his companions canonized after his death and which still stands viable for all ages."[59] Clearly, this 'totalitarian' dimension remains a core component of modern Islamic 'fundamentalist' movements as exemplified by such organizations as the Muslim Brotherhood under al-Banna and the Jamaat-i-Islami led by Mawdudi and their determination to control the actions and even the thoughts of their followers (see Chapter 1).

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[56]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 462.

[57]. Ibid., p. 462.

[58]. Maulana Muhammed Ali, *Muhammed The Prophet* 6th Ed. (Lahore: Anjuman-i-Isha'at-i-Islam, 1984), p. 271.

A further crucial role performed by ideology is what Gramsci terms its 'relevance' or practicality to a given situation. In other words, it is important that a certain ideology is "historically organic ... to a given structure" or that "ideologies are historically necessary" not "arbitrary, rationalistic, or willed."[60] In this regard, Islam can be described as an organic ideology because, as Watt states: "Foremost among the reasons for the success of Muhammad was the attractiveness of Islam and its relevance as a religious and social system to the needs of the Arabs."[61]

The final, and perhaps most important, measure of a successful revolutionary ideology is the degree to which these ideas act to unify and prepare the group for its confrontation with the dominant hegemonic force. Gramsci stresses that probably the primary function of ideology is its ability "to cement and unify" the "entire social bloc" in its revolutionary struggle.[62] The extent to which the Islamic ideology sought to unify its diverse followers will be examined more closely when we investigate the organizational structure of the movement. At this point, however, it is important to see how all of Islam's principal 'ideological' pronouncements - totality, universality, brotherhood, equality, justice, and freedom - combined to create an ideology aimed, above all else, at unifying a divergent group of individuals into supporting the overthrow of the current system and the installation of a 'new' regime. As a result, it becomes clear that the primary function of espousing these 'ideal' principles was to "preserve a degree of homogeneity and a unity of action" between very different individuals.[63]

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[59]. Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 284.

[60]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 376-377.

[61]. Watt, *Muhammad*, p. 206.

However, as is the case with most of the dimensions of early Islam it was Muhammad himself, his character, his skills, and most fundamentally his message, which did the most to unify and synthesize these diverse components into one compact movement. As Rodinson argues:

> The ideology which provided millions of Muslims with their purposes in life was, after all, wholly dependent on this one man who was the last mouthpiece of the word of *Allah*. As

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[62]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 328.

[63]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. xlviii.

> he had been the source of the Muslim community, so he remained the symbol of ideological unity.[64]

Even after his conquest of Mecca (630) - until his death in 632 - Muhammad did not lose sight of the importance of maintaining ideological conviction and, above all else, the unity of the Islamic community.[65] According to Rodinson:

> Muhammad was still the Messenger of God and his chief duty, as he saw it, was still to teach men the truth about Allah and the proper way to worship him. Ideological unity was to be strengthened, bit by bit, in the interests both of the spread of the true faith and of the solidarity of the Muslim state.[66]

In the end, it is clear that through his ideological teachings and pronouncements, especially those originating from the Koran, Muhammad unified his followers to such a degree that he replaced the bloodshed, inequality, and division of the tribal system with a new, energetic, and egalitarian-based community. As a result, Muhammad had ideologically unified the Arab people and bestowed upon them a sense of awareness and pride that they had not previously known.[67] In other words, he established a new hegemon, the 'Pax Islamica,' which continues to dominate the political, economic, and social structures of the region even fourteen hundred years after his mortal demise.[68]

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[64]. Ibid., p. 302.

[65]. Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, pp. 32-33.

[66]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 283.

[67]. Watt, *Muhammad*, p. 224.

ORGANIZATION

When one examines the organization of the Islamic movement under Muhammad, it is clear that it exhibits many similarities with Gramsci's ideas in both its conceptualization and construction. In terms of the general structure of the revolutionary movement, both Gramsci and Muhammad realized that all organizations require three definitive components: the leadership, the mass, and the intermediary or vanguard.[69] They also understood that each integral part of the organization was required to actively participate in the hegemonic endeavour and to adapt to the constantly changing circumstances of the struggle.[70] Finally, both Gramsci and Muhammad realized that certain individual and group characteristics must be present between the leadership and the masses, and among the individual members themselves, if they were to attain their revolutionary aims. Characteristics such as a faith and conviction in the ultimate objectives of the movement, along with discipline and unquestioned obedience to the leadership, are unequivocally required if the counter-hegemonic force under construction is to expand and eventually seize the prize of political power.

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[68]. Ibid., p. 224.

[69]. See Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 152-153.

[70]. As was examined in Chapter 3, it was Gramsci's belief that each individual member of the revolutionary group must perform an active, not passive role, in the political struggle, that differentiated Gramsci most clearly from many of his fellow Marxists.

Before one examines the similar ideas of organizational construction shared by Gramsci and Muhammad - ideas that it has been implicitly argued transcend both time and space - it is important to recognize one of the crucial differences between the two revolutionaries. This key distinction is rooted in their conception of the political party as the organism through which the hegemonic struggle must be directed. In other words, while Gramsci asserts that any struggle must be organized within the confines of the modern political party,[71] for all intents and purposes, Muhammad was the Islamic party and the Islamic movement was Muhammad.[72]

However, on this issue two further points should be raised. In one sense, Gramsci does state that "the Modern Prince, the myth-prince, cannot be a real person, a concrete individual ... history has already provided this organism and it is the political party."[73] Yet, in quoting Machiavelli's desire for the return of the 'Prince,'[74] Gramsci does qualify this statement by asserting that at an earlier period an individual leader could in fact attain such power as to dominate a counter-hegemonic movement. Therefore, what was true of Machiavelli's era may no longer be true of Gramsci's own, but it certainly was valid in Muhammad's time some 900 years before Machiavelli.

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[71]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 129.

[72]. For an example see Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 170

[73]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 129.

In a second and related argument, one can perhaps take greater exception to Gramsci's contention that "the Party," rather than a specific individual, such as a Napoleon or Caesar, is a necessary component in leading the masses to victory. Gramsci may have realized that no such 'princely' figure existed at his time within the Italian socialist/communist movement, but it is clear that even in the twentieth century a new 'Prince,' like a Muhammad, has more often than not been the determining factor in the either the success or failure of a revolutionary movement. One would have to wonder if revolutions would have succeeded in Russia, China, and Iran, without the role played by certain individuals such as Lenin, Mao, or Khomeini. It seems clear that the Nazi Party would not have gained power in the revolutionary environment of 1930s Germany without the demagogue Hitler. The above comments are not meant to dispel Gramscian theory. Gramsci was always interested in characteristics of leadership, and more specifically, how they applied to the particular case of Italy. In a way, his reliance on the political party and his willingness to forsake a new Caesar was probably due more to the fact that the communists in Italy had no one individual that could assume the 'princely' mantle like Benito Mussolini, head of the Italy Fascist Party, and Gramsci's chief opponent for hegemonic supremacy.

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[74]. See Gramsci, "Notes on Machiavelli's Politics," *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 125-133.

In spite of the preceding comments, it is clear that Gramsci recognizes the determining function the leadership performs in all revolutionary ventures in terms of both the character of the leader or leaders and in reference to their 'administrative' capabilities. In terms of character, Gramsci clearly understands that this is a crucial component of leadership. In fact, in his analysis of Machiavelli he praises him for forsaking utopian solutions and appreciating the fundamental role performed by leadership. "Instead he [Machiavelli] represented this [political] process in terms of qualities, characteristics, duties, and requirements of a concrete individual."[75]

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[75]. Ibid., p. 125.

The relationship between character and leadership was undeniably the most important factor accounting for the eventual success of the Islamic movement. For it could only be an individual with unquestionable credentials, a trusted character possessing the most upright qualities, who would have been accepted as a Prophet by his people and not deemed an imposter. Even before his calling Muhammad was referred to as *'al amin'* or 'the trustworthy one.'[76]

It is not surprising that devout Muslims heap such praise on their beloved Prophet. To quote Maulana Muhammad Ali:

> The Holy Prophet, all by himself, combines in his person, in a much higher degree, the collective virtues of all the Israelite prophets - the manliness of Moses, the tenderness of Aaron, the generalship of Joshua, the patience of Job, the daring of David, the grandeur of Solomon, the simplicity of John, and the humility of Jesus.[77]

This quotation most clearly demonstrates the almost supernatural view many Muslims possess of their Prophet.

However, while such praise is expected from a believer, even non-Muslim western scholars recognize, in a more objective manner, that Muhammad must have been held in great esteem to be followed and supported over such a long period of time, especially when many of those years were filled with persecution and hardship. According to Watt:

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[76]. See Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 58, and Royster, "Muhammad as Teacher and Exemplar," pp. 252-253.

[77]. Ali, *Muhammed The Prophet*, pp. 274-275.

> His readiness to undergo persecution for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him, and looked up to him as leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement - all argue his fundamental integrity.[78]

Even the secularist Rodinson asserts that the success of Islam was

> to a great extent dependent on ... the charismatic power of the messenger of *Allah*... Ultimately he was able, intelligently and without resorting to force or drama, to obtain his followers agreement to the decisions he had taken.[79]

This example helps to demonstrate that the unquestioning faith that Muhammad's followers held in his decisions was based primarily on the trust and conviction they placed in his character. Of course, all this is not to suggest that Muhammad was perfect. Like any other mortal he did have flaws. Yet, it does demonstrate that his moral conviction and his upright character imbued his followers with a trust and faith in his guidance to such an extent that they were willing to sacrifice even their lives for the cause of Islam.[80] In the final analysis, this is the greatest achievement any leader can attain.

While the high moral character Muhammad possessed represented an important component of his leadership qualities, he also demonstrated an ability to lead men, prepare them for battle, adapt to changing circumstances, and administer them in peace. According to Watt:

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[78]. Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca*, p. 52.

[79]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 221.

[80]. Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, p. 206.

> Had it not been for his gift as seer, statesman, and administrator, and behind these, his trust in God and firm belief that God had sent him, a notable chapter in the history of mankind would have remained unwritten.[81]

In other words, Muhammad was able to combine the model of ideal character with the skills of a revolutionary leader. As a result, it is clear that it was Muhammad, above all else, that melded the movement and unified the Islamic organization into a cohesive and successful revolutionary force.[82]

The view of Muhammad as a revolutionary strategist - both in terms of his theories and actions - was briefly examined in Chapter 1. Contemporary Muslim thinkers still believe in rigorous adherence to his example in re-enacting his rise from a single individual with a simple message to the leader of a state to the supreme ruler of a vast empire. Much of this ground will be more closely examined when we survey Muhammad's long-term strategy and his transition from a war of position to a war of movement.

However, for our present purposes, the one element of leadership Muhammad displayed that Gramsci himself deems the most essential was his innate ability, as the leader of a revolutionary movement, to comprehend the reality of a given situation and react with the appropriate strategy. Therefore, while preparation was important, as Gramsci himself states in criticizing the determinist views of the Marxist leadership in Italy, "it is a problem of the education of the masses, of their 'adaptation' in accordance with the requirements of the goal to be achieved."[83] This necessarily involves the ability to intervene in concrete reality, for leaders to "know the lines of least resistance."[84]

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[81]. Watt, *Muhammad*, p. 237.

[82]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 130.

As was examined above, Muhammad clearly understood the importance of such a strategy. In the initiation of his religious movement, Muhammad realized that it was the spiritual vacuum existing in contemporary society through which the Quraysh tribe was the most vulnerable. As his movement evolved, Muhammad demonstrated at various times the ability to adapt his message, organization, and strategy to the external environment. In a general sense, Armstrong argues:

> He [Muhammad] was creating this reformed religion of *al-Lah* slowly, step-by-step, as events unfolded. He had no clear, detailed picture of the religion at the outset and, as he was working alone without the help of an established tradition, he often had to feel his way forward by means of trial and error.[85]

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[83]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 195.

[84]. Ibid., p. 144.

[85]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 171.

Events such as the *Hijrah* or migration of Muhammad to Medina (AUG. 622), his resolution to send the initial raids against the Qurayshi caravans thus ensuring a confrontation with his former tribe (JAN. 624), and his decision in the same month to change the direction of the *Qibla* (prayer) and hence, asserting his independence from the Jews, all demonstrate the practical adaptation of his movement at times that necessitated such pragmatic action.

However, perhaps the clearest example of his ability to adapt to changing circumstances was in March 628 when, against the wishes of many of the men within his own party, Muhammad forsook war and confrontation in exchange for diplomacy and peace, and signed the Treaty of Hudaybiya with the Meccan leaders. Consequently, it has been argued by some that as a result of this dramatic shift in policy "no previous victory in Islam was greater than this."[86] Guillaume probably best summarizes the ability of Muhammad, as the supreme leader of Islam, to adapt the ideas and strategies of his movement to the realities of his environment.

> Moreover Muhammad was a man whose common sense never failed him. Those who deny his mental and psychic stability do so only by ignoring the overwhelming evidence of his shrewd appraisal of others and of the significance of what was going on in the world of his time, and his persistence in

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[86]. Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat Rasul Allah* (Translated by Ibn Hisham, *The Life of Mohammed*) ed. Alfred Guillaume (Lahore; Karachi; Dacca: Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 507.

> the face of constant opposition until he united his people in the religion of Islam.[87]

Accordingly, there was clearly more to Muhammad than a man with the character and piety of a prophet. He was a revolutionary, and he acquired the adroit skills necessary to adapt his movement to the realities of the situation. Consequently, in the end, he achieved the supreme goal desired by every revolutionary movement, the actual seizure of political power.

The second principal component of any revolutionary organization is the vanguard of the party. In other words, for a counter-hegemonic force to be successful there must be present a small 'inner circle' of individuals that are willing to lead the party or movement in all facets of its ideological teachings, organizational structure, and strategic planning. The fact that Muhammad dominated every facet of the Islamic movement is not to suggest that the Prophet did not rely on a 'inner circle' of his closest and most trusted companions to assist him in this endeavour. Unquestionably the closest of these companions was Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr was the one who accompanied the Prophet on the *Hijrah* or migration from Mecca;[88] he was also the person asked to lead the prayers after the Prophet became ill - eventually leading to his appointment as the first Caliph. But perhaps most importantly, it was Abu Bakr, as the first individual to accept the Islamic message outside of Muhammad's own household, who steadfastly supported and stood by the Prophet from the earliest days of the movement.[89]

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[87]. Guillaume, *Islam*, p. 25.

[88]. See *The Koran*, 9:42.

In addition to Abu Bakr, there were others on whom the Prophet most intimately depended. Umar, the second Caliph, was also important to the Prophet's inner circle, and it is clear that Umar's conversion to Islam represented a momentous event in the movement's development.[90] In fact, the personality of his two closest companions reflected the very diversity and complexity of Muhammad himself. Abu Bakr was more of an intellectual and prone to portraying his faith in a gentler fashion, while Umar's temper and physical prowess were legendary.[91] In addition to Abu Bakr and Umar, there were others who played a crucial role in Muhammad's inner circle or the vanguard of the Islamic movement. There was Zayd, who Muhammad would later adopt as his own son.[92] One could also add Ali to this list, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, as well as the fourth Caliph. However, the specifics of personality are of less concern than the fact that it was these men who remained the closest companions of the Prophet and supported Muhammad throughout his struggle, both during times of persecution and in periods of success, and hence, were those whose faith in both Islam and the Prophet never wavered.

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[89]. Haykal, *The Life Of Muhammad*, p. 82.

[90]. For a description of this event and its relevance see Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 128, Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 104, and Guillaume, *Islam*, p. 34.

[91]. Haykal, *The Life Of Muhammad*, p. 177.

[92]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 129.

Finally, in a more functional sense regarding the role of the vanguard, it is clear that even though the Prophet held near absolute and total power over his congregation and the Islamic movement, he realized the importance of consulting with his inner circle and achieving a degree of consensus, especially during times of crisis. Two of the most prominent examples were during the battle of Uhud where it was decided to go forth and meet the Meccan army instead of remaining within the confines of Medina, and at the battle of the Ditch, where consultation led to the decision to build a ditch, thus obstructing the Meccans' entrance to the city. In the Koran there are various examples where consultation or *'shura'* is recommended as the most prudent means through which to reach an appropriate agreement on the desired policy. Consequently, the principal intention behind the endorsement of *shura* is to allow a consensus to be achieved without appearing dictatorial or arrogant. Probably the best example is from the battle of Uhud mentioned above.

> It was thanks to God's mercy that you [Muhammad] dealt so leniently with them. Had you been cruel or hard-hearted, they would have surely deserted you. Therefore pardon them and implore God to forgive them. Take counsel with them in the conduct of affairs; and when you are resolved, put your trust in God. God loves those that are trustful.[93]

This example once more demonstrates the clarity of the Prophet's views on leadership. For though he could have acted, as the messenger of God, in any fashion he deemed necessary in relation to the circumstances at hand, he realized that prudent delegation was necessary regarding those affairs which could risk fatal divisions within the movement.[94]

The third component of the revolutionary organizational structure is the individual, or the 'mass' element. It has already been stressed, in some detail, how Gramsci elevates the role of the individual in his conception of the revolutionary struggle. In contrast to the view of certain earlier Marxists, and even many within his own party, Gramsci rejects the instrumentalist conception of the masses, instead arguing for the fundamental role each individual performs in the building of the counter-hegemonic bloc.

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[93]. *The Koran*, 3:159. Other examples in the Koran include: "Nobles, let me hear your counsel, for I make no decision without your consent." *The Koran*, 27:31, and "...conduct their affairs by mutual consent..." *The Koran*, 40:36.

[94]. Gilani makes an interesting point regarding the delegation of authority by the Prophet to his inner circle. Even if the revolution succeeded Muhammad realized that he alone could not instill the beliefs and message of Islam throughout the world. Thus, it was only through this vanguard - the companions of the Prophet - that Muhammad could hope to "convert a great, ideological, revolutionary movement into a system, and the system into a society." Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, p. 112.

The role of the individual in Islam has already been investigated, to a degree, when we examined Muhammad's earlier conceptualization of the role of the individual within Meccan society and how the position of the individual had been detrimentally affected by rapid economic growth and the corresponding breakdown of the tribal system. In fact, it was demonstrated that one of the most crucial aspects of the early message of the Koran was its elevation of the position of the individual within society and the affirmation of the individual as the basic foundation of the Islamic movement. Consequently, the reformation of the individual, his heart and soul, constituted the initial stage in the construction of the counter-hegemonic force.[95] Watt emphasizes this personal component of Islam when he states:

> In concluding the review of the religious institutions of Islam attention may be drawn to the individualism which pervades them... In short, all the strict obligations of Islamic worship could be carried out even if there was only one Muslim in the world.[96]

However, Watt expands his discussion by demonstrating that one of the crucial elements of the Islamic message was its ability to juxtapose the desires of the individual with the communal needs of the movement to produce a coherent structure between the extremes of both communalism and individualism. Therefore, according to Watt:

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[95]. Ibid., pp. 49-50.

[96]. Watt, *Muhammad At Medina*, p. 309.

> In one respect it was a community of individuals, for Islam accepted the tendency towards individualism, and even encouraged it (as in the new family structure). The ultimate moral sanction in Islam, punishment in Hell applies to the individual for his conduct as an individual. On the other hand, the individual was taken out of his isolation and insecurity and made to feel that he belonged to the *Ummah*.[97]

In many ways, the individual within the Islamic movement enjoyed the benefits of both worlds. He still remained a part of the grander aims of the overall movement, but his own individual needs, desires, and importance were never lost on Muhammad as the essential foundation on which to construct the revolutionary bloc.

In addition to the importance of a sound organizational structure, both Gramsci and Muhammad also emphasized the role performed by specific organizational characteristics if a counter-hegemonic bloc was to be successful. The first vital attribute was the need for an unquestioning faith and belief in the ultimate aims of the movement. In this sense, loyalty to the group and true conviction in its principles must be absolute. As Gramsci states: "The most important element [for an individual within a movement] is undoubtably one whose character is determined not by reason, but by faith."[98]

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[97]. Ibid., p. 301.

[98]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 339.

The role of faith in Islam, as in all religions, is obviously of paramount importance. The declaration of faith and the requirement of such conviction is asserted throughout the Koran as constituting one of the necessary conditions for being a good and pious Muslim.[99] In fact, the need to retain undying faith and belief in ultimate victory is the very purpose of the Koran's revelation. For the Koran states:

> This [The Koran] is a declaration to mankind: A guide and an admonition to the righteous. Take heart and do not despair. *Have faith and you shall triumph.*[100]

The extent of a person's faith and the depth of one's conviction are obviously crucial determinants in the success of a revolutionary movement, since at many times in its development the movement will be severely tested by the trials it encounters. It was during these periods of extreme bleakness and dismay that faith - in both the principles of God and the leadership of Muhammad - was essential. Terms such as dedication, devotion, and conviction are all used in examining the relationship of the followers to both Muhammad personally, and the greater Islamic movement.[101]

There were probably two specific periods when the faith and fortitude of the movement were most supremely tested. The first occurred when opposition to Islam by the Meccan elite became more concerted, probably not long after the affair of the 'Satanic Verses' when Muhammad denounced the pagan idols of the Meccans and stripped them of all their power (615).[102] As Haykal states:

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[99]. For some examples, see *The Koran*, 2:177, 42:36, 70:22-35, 90:14-15.

[100]. Ibid., 3:139. (Emphasis added - TJB).

[101]. See Guillaume, *Islam*, p. 32, and Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, p. 53.

> One must appreciate the strength of these men's faith and the depth of their conviction at a time when the new religion was not even complete and the Quran was not yet fully revealed...[103]

The second occurred in the early years of the Medinan period when, severely undermanned, the Muslims threw the full weight of their faith in God and Muhammad at the battles of both Badr (624)[104] and Uhud (625). These examples help to demonstrate the overriding necessity in achieving a true conviction in the principles and righteousness of one's supreme and fundamental aims. In the case of the Islamic movement, only such faith could have sustained the movement in the face of so great a numerical disadvantage.

In addition to faith and conviction, it is essential, especially as a group expands, that the discipline and the obedience of each individual member of the movement remain unquestioning. It is important to note in Islam that certain of its ritual pillars have as their underlying rationale a need to discipline the individual within the context of the larger community, such as the five daily prayers and the fasting during Ramadan. In a practical sense, it is clear that discipline was necessary to unify a divergent group of individuals to bring about the triumph of the movement. Armstrong utilizes the example of Badr to demonstrate that while faith was essential for victory, the discipline exhibited by the Muslims also performed a crucial role.

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[102]. For a more thorough explanation of this event, see above.

[103]. Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 92.

[104]. See Guillaume, *Islam*, p. 43.

> They [the Quraysh] fought in the old style with careless bravado and each chief led his own men, so the army lacked a unified command. But the Muslims were strictly disciplined and desperate and had been carefully drilled by Muhammad.[105]

The requirement of obedience from each individual member towards the larger movement was just as crucial to the success of Islam as discipline. More importantly, that obedience was to be bestowed by the Muslims upon their leader without question.[106] In other words, it must be given freely to Muhammad as the messenger of God. As the Koran asserts:

> I am indeed your true apostle. Fear God, then, and follow me. For this I demand of you no recompense, for none can reward me except the Lord of the Universe. Have fear of God and follow me.[107]

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[105]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, pp. 175-176.

[106]. Gramsci too writes of the absolute need for unquestioning obedience. According to Gramsci: "For the belief is common that obedience must be automatic ... and not only must it come about without any necessity or rationality being needed, but it must be unquestioning." Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 145.

[107]. *The Koran*, 36:102.

In fact, the need to give unfettered obedience to the Prophet is so important that, according to Watt, "... the words 'obey God and his messenger' and various equivalents occur about forty times in the Quran..."[108]

The Koran also stresses the fundamental necessity of unquestioning obedience by demonstrating how such behaviour is at the very core of the duties incumbent on the righteous and pious Muslim.[109] The components of obedience and faith, or a conviction and loyalty towards the greater cause, thus become intertwined in the hearts and the minds of the followers. In the end, the type of obedience demanded by Muhammad is in fact more powerful than anything a secularist ideology could demand. By calling on obedience to God, Muhammad assures that disobedience does not just harm the individual in this world, but more importantly, leads to eternal damnation in the afterlife.

In terms of the construction of a viable counter-hegemonic force, the final similarity between Gramsci and Muhammad is the extent to which they stress the importance of unity.[110] Within any organizational structure, unity - as illustrated by faith, conviction and obedience - is essential to the achievement of success. The importance of establishing the Muslims as a unified 'community of believers' was an integral part of the movement since its earliest formation. This unity of his followers was formalized in the Charter of Medina as Muhammad established the new Muslim community (*ummah*) as a political unit replacing the ties of blood and tribe that had previously bound his people.[111] Consequently, this Charter did not simply symbolize the theoretical unification of the group, but more importantly, it marked the practical organization of the movement through the assertion that the community was now bound by "a covenant of mutual obligation."[112] Thus, the Charter of Medina demarcated the point at which the ideological pronouncements regarding the unity of the movement were now elevated to a practical expression of the fundamental organizational structure of the movement. This change was even recognized in the Koran where the community was now regarded as "the believers being a band of brothers."[113] Furthermore, in the Koran, it is God Himself who has sanctified the unity of the followers.

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[108]. Watt, *Muhammad At Medina*, p. 233.

[109]. Some examples include: "Yet obedience and courteous speech would become them more. Indeed, should war be decided upon, it would be better for them to be true to God." *The Koran*, 47:21. "If you prove obedient, God will reward you. But if you run away ... He will inflict on you a stern chastisement." *The Koran*, 48:16. "Know that God's apostle is among you. If he obeyed you in many matters, you would surely come to grief. But God has endeared the Faith to you and beautified it in your hearts, making unbelief, wrongdoing, and disobedience abhorrent to you. Such are those who are rightly guided through God's grace and bounty. God is all-knowing and wise." *The Koran*, 49:8.

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[110]. In Chapter 3, Gramsci emphasized that the extent of unity within a specific revolutionary organization - its degree of organic unity - is essential to a counter-hegemonic movement and can sometimes be a decisive factor in spite of its seemingly numerical disadvantage. See Gramsci, *The Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 217

[111]. See Watt, *Muhammad*, p. 94 and Guillaume, *Islam*, p. 41.

[112]. Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983), p. 125.

> Remember the favour God has bestowed upon you: how, after your enmity, He united your hearts, so that you are now Brothers through His grace... Let there become of you a nation.[114]

However, it should be pointed out that this unity was not simply the sharing of common aims through an identical ideology and a shared communal structure, but was to be expressed as an 'organic unity.' This idea of the revolutionary movement as an 'organic unity' has already been examined in several earlier passages. This is not true simply in the case of Gramsci,[115] but also in the writings of contemporary Islamic theorists, such as Mawdudi (see Chapter 1). The importance of organic unity between the leader and the led was also a fundamental component of the Islamic movement under Muhammad. In fact, organic analogies are found in various passages of the Koran.[116] Of course, in Islam these organic interactions between leaders and led are described as primarily relationships between God and the individual. Yet, for our purposes, it is clear that the organic analogy demonstrates the true essence of the larger organizational structure of the movement. This is true both in terms of its structural components - the relationship between leaders and led - and the characteristics that are demanded of each individual to assure the success of the greater movement - faith and obedience - in its ultimate objectives.[117]

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[113] *The Koran*, 49:10.

[114] Ibid., 3:104,106.

[115] For some examples see Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 180, 188, 190, and 418.

[116] These examples were already mentioned in Chapter 1 regarding the organic unity of the contemporary Islamic movements. According to the Koran: "He that gives his wealth for the cause of God is like a grain of corn which brings forth seven ears, each bearing a hundred grains." *The Koran*, 2:262. "Do you not see how God compares a good word to a good tree? Its root is firm and its branches are in the sky: it yields its fruit in every season by God's leave." *The Koran*, 14:27. "Muhammad is God's apostle. Those who follow him are ruthless to the unbelievers but merciful to one another ... they are like the

LONG-TERM STRATEGY

The final component in Gramsci's theoretical and practical construction of a counter-hegemonic bloc is his detailed view regarding the strategy necessary for achieving the fundamental aims of his revolutionary movement. As Gramsci stresses, any successful strategy must be active, deliberate, and long term. In this section, we will examine Muhammad's long-term strategy and the ways in which his views approximated very closely to those espoused by Gramsci. Muhammad also realized that for any strategy to be successful it must be developed over the long

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seed which puts forth its shoot and strengthens it, so that it can rise stout and firm upon its stalk, delighting the sowers." *The Koran*, 48:30.

[117]. As Gilani argues: "An in-depth study of the Prophet's struggle spread over 23 years reveals that he laid maximum stress on unity among his followers." Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, p. 169.

term. Consequently, this must include a long period of preparation and education and the dissemination of the Islamic message before one could hope to engage in a frontal attack, or a 'war of movement,' against the ruling hegemon. He understood that only a counter-hegemon, presenting a truly alternative conception of the world, separate and independent from its opponents, could embark on a strategy of *'Jihad.'* Most succinctly, the strategy of Muhammad involved a process of education, separation, and confrontation in his quest for victory over the ruling Quraysh.[118]

In examining the early years of the Islamic movement it is clear Muhammad's strategy was very similar in nature to the 'war of position' conceptualized by Gramsci. Especially during the Meccan period (610-622), Muhammad set out to construct an alternative conception of the world based on the existence of one omnipotent God, to counter the pagan views of the Meccan elite. In fact, Muhammad's understanding of the need to first implant the beliefs of his message and thus build the inner strength of his individual supporters, prevented him from announcing the existence of his movement publicly for three years after his original calling.[119]

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[118]. Gilani contextualizes this view by stating: "To summarize, the path of Islamic revolution is preaching and following the tradition of the Prophet [education], migration in the name of *Allah* [separation], and *jehad,* the holy war in the name of *Allah* [confrontation]." Ibid., p. 201.

The extent to which the early passages of the Koran emphasize the need for the individual to first reform himself to the message of Islam and, in the process, to accept its alternative conception of the world has already been examined.[120] Consequently, all the earliest converts to Islam understood that it was the religious nature of the message which must be the primary focus. In addition, the individual should allot top priority to the actual practise of the pillars (i.e., rituals) of Islam.[121]

It was also essential, as noted by Gramsci, that during the war of position the individual perform an active function within the movement. This active role involved the need for constant education and preparation. Muhammad understood the need of educating and teaching the principles of the Koran, while preparing the Muslims for the inevitable confrontation that awaited them.[122]

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[119]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 86.

[120]. See footnote 50.

[121]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 252. Once more, it is appropriate to quote Gilani who asserted that the primary thrust of the Islamic strategy must be "to bring about a moral revolution in an individual and to transform him." Gilani, *Methodology of the Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, p. 99.

[122]. Gibb, *Islam*, p. 30. In fact, Royster argues that as a teacher employed by *Allah* to spread the message of Islam, Muhammad took serious steps to ensure an educated community. Moreover, in his attempts to convert the nomadic tribes of Arabia, Muhammad would

While the ideological preparation of his followers was an important first stage in the creation of a counter-hegemonic force, the next step - initiated in the late Meccan period, and reaching its climax in the Muslim migration from Mecca to Medina - was the final severing of blood ties between the Muslims and their former 'brothers' in Mecca. According to Lings, this involved "cutting off of all ties of home and homeland for the sake of God."[123] As Gramsci argues, a crucial element of the war of position involves a total separation from one's surroundings and the need to strive towards an alternative conception of the world. It is clear that the Muslims now perceived their movement in dialectical opposition to the pagan and idol-worshipping Meccans. While in the later Meccan period, it could be stated that the Islamic movement had gained autonomy by "defining itself in relation to the outside world;"[124] clearly by the migration, according to Rodinson: "The community had become us, as the sociologists

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first dispatch his messengers to instruct the tribe members in the rudiments of Islam. Royster, "Muhammad as Teacher and Exemplar," p. 240. Haykal gives a concrete example of the primacy Muhammad allotted to first teaching the principles of Islam. In his original dealings with the Khazraj tribe of Medina, the first covenant declared in 621 had as its aim the instilling of the ideas and principles of Islam within the new converts, while no mention of war or violent struggle was suggested. Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 154.

[123]. Lings, *Muhammed*, pp. 119-120.

[124]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 129.

would say, a group sharing a common attitude towards those outside it."[125]

By the beginning of the Medinan period this totality and separation of the movement had become complete. By leaving their roots and their families and the blood ties that had given them protection, even during the increased persecution of the later Meccan period, the Muslims had effectively cut themselves off from the pagans of Mecca. In terms of the actual *Hijrah*, Gilani states: "To pave the way for the Islamic revolution, the Holy Prophet's strategy demanded the formation of two distinct camps of the Muslims and non-believers to face each other openly."[126] This total separation of the Muslim community and their promotion of an alternative vision or ideology solidified the counter-hegemonic nature of the Islamic movement. Clearly, this group now formed an independent community, "a wholly separate society, complete in itself and obedient only to its own laws."[127]

It would be incorrect, however, to see the *Hijrah* or migration to Medina as representing an immediate transformation of the struggle from one of 'a war of position' to 'a war of movement.' In fact, the first eighteen months in Medina were spent continuing to disseminate the message of Islam, as the war of position was transferred 200 miles to the northeast. While many of the pagans of Medina immediately shunned his pronouncements - this group would later become known as the 'hypocrites' - Muhammad seemed to have some success in his attempts to convince the Jewish tribes in and around the oasis of the righteousness of his cause, based on their common monotheistic belief in One God.[128]

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[125]. Ibid., p. 132.

[126]. Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, p. 56. Also see p. 61. In this sense, even the Koran asserts: "We disown you and the idols which you worship besides God. We renounce you: enmity and hate shall reign between us until you believe in God only." *The Koran*, 60:4.

[127]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 146.

However, the Jewish tribes soon began to realize the negative repercussions this 'new Prophet' was having on their status within Medina. As early as 623, the Jewish tribes in Medina began to vehemently reject Muhammad and his message.[129] After originally having accepted some of his revelations the Jews began to denounce and mock the Prophet and question his claims of prophethood, and through theological debate began to point out his inaccuracies regarding the ancient stories of the Old Testament.

Muhammad's first reaction was to instigate a war of words with the Jews which ultimately led to the altering of some of the principal rituals of the Muslims away from their Jewish origins. It was clear Muhammad was attempting to win over new converts by redefining the religion of Islam by making it more coherent and attractive to potential supporters. In a sense, Muhammad was embarking on a type of strategy towards the Jews of Medina - a war of position - which he had already initiated against his Meccan brethren. In this new war of position, as Gramsci describes, the primary goal is to separate oneself, and to make one's movement and ideology independent from one's opponent.

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[128]. At the time, there were three principal Jewish groups that lived in and around Medina with the Arabs. These were the Qaynuqa, Nadir, and Qurayza tribes.

[129]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 159.

Muhammad's first step in this direction was to emphasize the position of Abraham as the true father of Islam. As Armstrong asserts:

> In Mecca, Moses had been the favourite Prophet of the Muslims; in Medina his place was taken by Abraham, and Muhammad had found a perfect answer to the jibes of the Jews. He and his Muslims were returning to the spirit of pure faith (*hanifiyyah*) of the man who had been the first Muslim to surrender.[130]

Guillaume concurs by stating: "He [Muhammad] claimed Abraham and Ismael as founders of the Ka'ba and of Arabian monotheism pure and undefiled, and thus independent of, and prior to both Judaism and Christianity."[131] The Koran itself reiterates this newfound belief in the independence of the Muslims vis-à-vis the other monotheistic religions.

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[130]. Ibid., p. 160.

[131]. Guillaume, *Islam*, p. 44.

> Abraham was neither Jew nor Christian. He was an upright man, who surrendered himself to God. He was no idolater. Surely the men who are nearest to Abraham are those who follow him, this Prophet, and the true believers.[132]

These new declarations demonstrated not only the separate and independent nature of Islam from the traditional monotheistic religions, but also bestowed upon Islam a superiority vis-à-vis those religions that were declared to have strayed from the true path of God.

In addition, Muhammad made other substantial changes to emphasize the independent and separate nature of the Muslim sect. He changed the period of fasting from the Jewish fast of Ashura to the month of Ramadan. However, the most dramatic change occurred in January 624 when Muhammad, through a revelation from God, sought to change the *Qibla* (the direction of the prayer) from Jerusalem to Mecca.[133] According to Armstrong:

> The change of the *Qibla* has been called Muhammad's most creative religious gesture. In turning towards Mecca, Muslims were tacitly declaring that they belonged to none of the established communities, but were turning only towards God Himself. In prostrating themselves in the direction of the Ka'ba, which was *independent* of the two older revelations responsible for splitting up the one religion of God into warring sects, they were reverting to the primordial faith of the man who had built it.[134]

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[132] *The Koran*, 3:67-68.

[133] According to the Koran: "The foolish will ask: 'What has made them turn away from their *qiblah*?'" *The Koran*, 2:142 and "Whichever way you depart, face towards the Holy Mosque. This is surely the truth from your Lord." *The Koran*, 2:149.

[134] Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 162. (Emphasis added - TJB). Also see Gilani, who speaks of the changing of the *Qibla* as asserting the "uniqueness and individuality of the Islamic movement." According to Gilani: "The Prophet desired an independent and different *Qibla* than

It should once more be noted that in his war of position and influence with the Jews, Muhammad first had to declare his separation and independence from the Jews before he could physically confront them. In other words, one must successfully conduct a war of position before embarking on a war of movement.

At approximately the same time that Muhammad had decided on a more conflictual approach towards the Jews in an attempt to consolidate his power inside Medina, he also realized that if he wanted his Islamic movement to succeed and gain a permanent foothold in Central Arabia he would eventually have to confront his neighbour to the south. In other words, the natural hostility existing between Muhammad and the Meccans would need to be resolved in one fashion or another since peaceful coexistence was an impossibility.[135] Consequently, in January 624, Muhammad made the fateful decision to launch a raid or *'razzia'* on a Meccan trade caravan travelling from Mecca to Syria, fully realizing that such a raid would now make direct confrontation with his former tribesmen unavoidable. For Haykal, the January 624 raid represented a

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that of the Jews and Christians." Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, pp. 178-179.

[135]. Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca*, p. 148.

definitive change in Muhammad's external policy from a war of position to a war of movement. According to Haykal:

> The ... expedition constituted ... the crossroads of Muslim policy toward the Quraysh, for it now opened the door for the two parties to compete in military power and strength as they had done formerly in word and idea.[136]

Not surprisingly, it was also after this first raid that the concept of *'Jihad,'* loosely defined as 'Holy War,' initially appeared in the Koran.

In terms of Muhammad's long-term strategy, it would be helpful to examine the concept of *'Jihad'* in the context of its meaning to the greater Islamic struggle, since in many ways, it epitomizes the crux of the entire strategy of the early Muslims. There is probably no other concept that is as identifiable with the militant Islamic cause than *jihad*. There is also probably no other term as misunderstood. In this sense, according to Armstrong:

> [T]he root jhd implies more than a 'holy war.' It signifies a physical, moral, spiritual, and intellectual effort ... it was and remains a duty for Muslims to commit themselves to the struggle on all fronts - moral, spiritual, and political, - to create a just and decent society, where the poor and vulnerable are not exploited in the way that God had intended man to live.[137]

Gilani also demonstrates that in spite of what many may believe, especially in the West, *jihad* does not simply infer physical confrontation.

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[136]. Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 216.

[137]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 168.

> Waging a Holy War [*Jihad*] is a revolutionary measure, and is indispensable for a far-reaching ideological revolution. It is not confined to fighting in the battlefield. It is fighting on all fronts and using all tactics, wisdom, and strategy worth applying.[138]

Clearly, both definitions of *jihad* provided by Armstrong and Gilani approximate very closely Gramsci's own views of the revolutionary struggle, especially in the sense that the struggle must be launched on all fronts against the hegemon simultaneously. In terms of a war of movement and physical confrontation, Armstrong does add a qualifier for those critics who perceive Islam as a 'religion of the sword,' for she states: "No radical social and political change has ever been achieved without bloodshed and because Muhammad was living in a period of confusion and disintegration, peace could only be achieved by the sword."[139] In other words, every revolutionary struggle has involved the loss of life, some more than others, and for the counter-hegemonic bloc these sacrifices are deemed a necessary evil in their struggle for hegemonic supremacy.[140]

A qualifying point should be included here in that Gramsci himself provides little insight to how the war of movement is to be conducted. This is in stark contrast to his exhaustive treatment of the various components of a war of position. However, for Gramsci, the war of movement probably still seemed a number of years away and therefore in less need of specification. But for Muhammad, after January 624, the war of movement against his Meccan enemies for supremacy in Central Arabia became a reality, and *jihad* became the final and decisive means through which to achieve victory.[141] This last point is most clearly demonstrated by the number of times the concept of *jihad* is mentioned in the Koran over the next few years.

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[138]. Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, p. 139.

[139]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 168.

[140]. According to Gilani only 918 lives were lost during the period of Muhammad's revolution (610-630). Though it is unclear how he had arrived at, or could ascertain, such an exact figure. Gilani, *Methodology of the Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, p. 223.

In terms of Muhammad's own 'war of movement,' it is probably most relevant to examine the way in which the concept evolved over time as the Muslim forces gained strength and the enmity between Muhammad and his former rulers became more intense. In other words, as the struggle for supremacy became more a question of survival, the concept of *jihad* is transformed from simply a defensive posture into that of a duty incumbent upon all Muslims - the sixth pillar of Islam. It was already demonstrated in Chapter 1 how these different pronouncements regarding *jihad* in the Koran remain the primary reason for its varying interpretations among modern Islamists. As a result, even Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb have very different views regarding *jihad* and its employment in the contemporary struggle.

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[141]. Ibid., p. 62.

In its original context - shortly after the first forays against the Meccans in January 624 - many of the earliest references to *jihad* seem to infer its usage strictly within a defensive context. Therefore, if you are attacked you can fight back, but if you are left alone then it would not be prudent for a Muslim, as a pious individual, to instigate a conflict. As we examined in Chapter 1, this view of *jihad* would more proximate with the arguments put forth by Hasan al-Banna.[142] In all the Koranic passages advocating a defensive type of strategy, God reveals to Muhammad that the Muslims should not initiate hostilities, but desist and allow good to defeat evil without the recourse to arms. In other words, only those attacked should resort to *jihad* and even in these cases, it should be kept strictly within the confines of self-defense.

However, it is clear that the concept of *jihad,* as advocated by the Koran, soon assumed a more offensive orientation - corresponding to the growing strength and confidence of the Muslims - and therefore being attacked was no longer a prerequisite for armed conflict. In fact, in certain passages this more offensively oriented view of *jihad* suggests that it may even be beneficial to initiate an attack against one's enemies. There is a good chance that most of these passages occurred after the battles of Badr and Uhud when the lines of conflict were clearly drawn and the hatred and animosity between the two factions was intensifying.[143] Even though in an early passage we examined how the Koran spoke despairingly of the aggressor,[144] this later time frame suggests that the level of the struggle between Medina and Mecca was increasing, not simply because the Koran permits the Muslims to initiate the attack, but since it actually encourages them to do so.

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[142]. Some examples from the Koran include: "Fight for the sake of God those that fight against you but do not attack them first. God does not like the aggressor." *The Koran*, 2:190. "Fight against them until idolatry is no more and God's religion reigns supreme. But if they desist, fight none except the evil-doers." *The Koran*, 2:193. "Permission to take up arms is hereby given to those who are attacked, because they have been wronged." *The Koran*, 22:39. This last quote is believed to have been the first passage received by Muhammad that authorised armed resistance towards his pagan enemies. See Glubb, *The Life and Times of Muhammad*, p. 145.

Finally, the third manner in which *jihad* is conceptualized within the Koran appears to transcend a simple offensively oriented *jihad* for strategic and tactical reasons related to worldly gain, and transforms its utilization into the realm of the hereafter. In other words, *jihad* became a duty incumbent on all Muslims, and to die for the cause of God - martyrdom - the highest reward an individual could hope to attain. At this point, perhaps from at some time around the battle of the Ditch until the conquest of Mecca (627-630), the demand for 'total war' made the need for full mobilization essential.[145] Consequently, if one refused to fight for the cause of God, the Koran argued that although the individual may escape punishment in this life, a stern judgement awaited him in the life to come.

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[143]. In this period, some of the examples of this more offensive minded conceptualization of *'Jihad'* are: "When the sacred months are over slay the idolaters wherever you find them. Arrest them, besiege them, and lie in ambush everywhere for them." *The Koran*, 9:5. "Whether unarmed or well-equipped, march on and fight for the cause of God, with your wealth and with your persons." *The Koran*, 9:41. "Make war on them until idolatry shall cease and God's religion shall reign supreme." *The Koran*, 8:90.

[144]. Ibid., 2:190.

It is at this stage that the concept of *jihad* becomes more closely linked with the rewards and punishments bestowed by God. It is also this conceptualization of *jihad* that appears to be more prominent in the writings of later, more 'radical' Islamists, such as Qutb and Mawdudi. Consequently, having faith in God was no longer sufficient to guarantee the most wondrous rewards of the afterlife. With the very existence of the community at stake in a life and death struggle against their former masters, every Muslim was required to assure victory, or at the very least, to prevent annihilation. In this context of total war, the greatest reward would be to die for the cause of God. As the Koran states most succinctly in reference to martyrdom:

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[145]. Some examples during this period would include: "God has given those that fight with their goods and their persons a higher rank than those who stay at home. God has promised all a good reward: but far richer is the recompense of those who fight for Him." *The Koran*, 4:75. "Did you suppose that you would enter Paradise before God has proved the men who fought for Him endured with fortitude?" *The Koran*, 3:143. "He that fights for God fights for himself... As for those that have faith and do good works, We shall cleanse them of their sins and reward them according to their noblest deeds." *The Koran*, 29:6.

> **Never think that those who were slain in the cause of God are dead. They are alive and well provided for by their Lord. Pleased with His gifts and rejoicing that those left behind who have not yet joined them have nothing to fear or to regret. Rejoicing in God's grace and bounty God will not deny the faithful their reward.**[146]

It is clear from the above discussion that while the concept of *jihad* is used throughout this period to describe the Muslims' 'war of movement' against the Meccans, the concept itself underwent a significant transformation. While it began as a defensive strategy for protection, as the Muslims grew in strength and stature and their hegemonic confrontation became more a question of survival, it was necessary to embark on total war with promises of eternal paradise as the ultimate reward.

At this point, in terms of Muhammad's long-term strategy, it must be emphasized that during the twenty-year struggle of the Islamic movement neither 'a war of position' nor 'a war of movement' was conducted to the complete exclusion of the other. Instead, each strategy naturally complemented the other. At certain times, peace and diplomacy and the promulgation of the Islamic message was necessary, while at other times, only conflict and confrontation were deemed appropriate responses to the situation at hand.[147]

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[146]. **Ibid., 3:169.**

Muhammad was well aware of the need for this dual perspective of consent and coercion, usually employed by the hegemon, for his own long-term strategy. For Muhammad was neither the wholly pious persuader idealized by generations of Muslims nor the war-ravaging satanic monster demonized by many in the West.[148] As Guillaume asserts: "Trustworthy tradition depicts a man of amazing ability in winning men's hearts by persuasion and in coercing and disarming his opponents."[149] Even the Koran, representing the beliefs and the strategy of the Islamic movement, evolved as a "complementary theory of war and peace."[150] This dual strategy itself is probably best exemplified in Muhammad's signing of the Treaty of Hudaybiya when he opted for diplomacy even though most of his own men shared the view that only direct confrontation against the Meccans would exact the necessary concessions from their former masters.

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[147]. **These ideas are of course very reminiscent of Gramsci's own ideas regarding the roles of both coercion and consent, "authority and hegemony, violence and civilisation" in the construction of the revolutionary party. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 170.**

[148]. **See Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 313.**

[149]. **Guillaume, *Islam*, p. 53.**

[150]. **Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 225.**

The final component that was imperative for a successful long-term strategy, as asserted by both Gramsci and Muhammad, was the need for patience, dedication, and fortitude in the revolutionary struggle. Gramsci spends much of *The Prison Notebooks* arguing vehemently against short-term and immediate solutions to difficult and intractable problems. In contrast to this spontaneity which he so deeply abhorred, Gramsci believes that "the essential task is that of systematically and patiently ensuring that this [counter-hegemonic] force is formed, developed, and rendered ever more homogeneous, compact, and self aware."[151] In other words, Gramsci clearly understood that Rome could not be built - nor seized - in a day.

The need for patience, and to endure hardship with fortitude and steadfastness, were all essential components of Muhammad's message and his long-term strategy.[152] The value of each characteristic in terms of the greater revolutionary struggle is mentioned at various times throughout the Koran.[153]

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[151]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 185.

[152]. For some examples see Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, pp. 51, 191, and 219.

[153]. Some examples include: "Believers fortify yourselves with patience and prayer. God is with those that are patient." *The Koran*, 2:154. "Many a small band has, by God's grace, vanquished a mighty army. God is with those who endure." *The Koran*, 2:244. "Obey God and His apostle and do not dispute with one another, lest you lose courage and your resolve. Have patience: God is with those that are patient." *The Koran*, 8:46. "Thus was your Lord's gracious word fulfilled for the Israelites, because they had endured with

The Koran did not deny the Muslims had suffered in their persecution, but in the end, assured them triumph in the face of such hardship.

> As for those who after persecution fled their homes for the cause of God, bearing ills with patience and putting their trust in the Lord, We will provide them with a good abode in life.[154]

Throughout the Koran it is clear that, for any strategy to be effective, patience is a virtue. In other words, for any strategy to be successful it must be long-term, organized, and focused on the essential role of the individual as the core component of the hegemonic struggle.

In the end, Muhammad's triumphant and almost unopposed entrance into Mecca in January 630 was only the beginning of a massive empire that stills holds sway over one-fifth of the world's population. For our purposes, Muhammad's revolutionary success, epitomized by the lack of resistance and the unwillingness of the Meccans to confront the 'new hegemon,' confirms two very important components of Gramsci's analysis. The first is that "a social group can, and indeed must, 'lead' (i.e., be hegemonic) before winning government power."[155] This is true of Islam under Muhammad, especially after the Treaty of Hudaybiya when the new and dynamic ideas of Islam spread

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fortitude." *The Koran*, 7:137. "We shall reward the steadfast according to their noblest deeds." *The Koran*, 6:97.

[154]. Ibid., 16:42.

[155]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 47.

across the Arabia desert. The second point is that "the war of position' once won is decisive definitively."[156] The reason the Meccans offered little resistance was that, in the end, they had nothing left to offer. Everyone now realized that it was time for the Muslims to take their rightful position as the new hegemonic force in the Arabian Peninsula.

THE RESULT?

When we examined the result that Gramsci foresaw for his own hegemonic struggle in Chapter 3, it was clear from both his writings, and from the conclusions of scholars that interpreted his work, that Gramsci exhibits little concern with the details and the structure of his post-hegemonic world. Instead, any reference to this new society envisions the generalities of a more just, equal, and moral world constructed on foundations that take into account the essential freedom of the individual. He argues that a new culture - based on the philosophy of the praxis - will arise and that 'quality will replace quantity,'[157] though the exact meaning of both concepts seems equally vague. What can be stated with any certainty is that the new culture will be universal, and provide the individual with a better life than he presently enjoys.

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[156]. Ibid., p. 239.

[157]. Ibid., p. 438.

On one hand, the realization of Muhammad's counter-hegemonic bloc was quite different from that envisioned by Gramsci. While Muhammad actually got to implement his ideology and theory to a concrete environment - a development which evaded Gramsci - the practice nonetheless failed to live up to the ideal. For, as Rodinson asserts: "Far from founding a classless society, it established a new class structure."[158] Of course, the ideals espoused by this revolutionary struggle, as those of every other revolution before and after, always fail to reach the lofty aims that it promulgated throughout the struggle.

On the other hand, the ideal that Muhammad and the early Islamists strove to achieve remains as true today as it did 1400 years ago. Like Gramsci, Muhammad's declared aim in promoting his new and revolutionary ideology was not simply the seizure of state power, but an attempt to create a fundamentally new civilization, a new system, and consequently, a new type of man.[159] The ideals of the revolution may have fallen by the wayside in the caliphal struggle that developed after the death of Uthman (d.655), and the unity of the Muslims was destroyed by dynastic struggles and inflated egos. But the ideals of the first Islamic revolution still exist for the contemporary Muslims as much as the ideals and slogans of the French and Russian Revolutions exist for those individuals who still believe such a world is possible. The notions of brotherhood, equality, justice, and freedom remain at the core of every ideology. In terms of Islam, as Rodinson states: "The outcome, naturally, was to be a completely free and harmonious, substantially egalitarian society, extending to all mankind the same ideal..."[160] Perhaps such a society is impossible, and in every case the naked struggle for power is simply an end in itself. But for the great masses of people who desire greater control over their own lives, a more equitable share of finite economic and political resources, and a truer sense of human dignity, they will continue to dream and to strive; for, in the end, it is the meek who must believe that they shall inherit the earth.

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[158]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. xlii.

[159]. See Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, especially pp. 112, 223.

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[160]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. xlii.

CHAPTER V: THE CASE STUDY:
HAMAS AND THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

In this chapter, the rise and development of political Islam in the West Bank and Gaza Strip will be examined. The explicit aim is to demonstrate that the Gramscian framework discussed in Chapter 3, and developed with reference to the experiences of Muhammad in Chapter 4, is the most effective means by which to explain the phenomenon of political Islam in Palestine. It will be argued that the Islamists' principal aim has become the construction of a counter-hegemonic force to provide the people of Palestine with a practical alternative to the current ruling hegemon, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) under the leadership of Yasir Arafat. In this sense, special emphasis will be allotted to Hamas and its development over the past ten years.[1]

This chapter will be divided into two sections. In the first, a brief history of the Islamic movement in Palestine will be presented. Beginning with the growth of the Muslim Brotherhood in - the 'parent' of Hamas - in the 1930s, the history of the Islamic movement will be examined with special emphasis on both the growth of the Muslim Brotherhood in the post-1967 era, and Hamas after the outbreak of the *intifada* in

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[1]. It must be stated that Hamas was not created originally for the purpose of providing an alternative to the PLO, but in response to the *intifada* and the continuing Israeli occupation. However, it has become clear that Hamas now sees the PLO's presence in Palestinian society as the main obstacle to increasing its own power. These issues will be examined more closely in terms of both Hamas' origin and the evolving relationship between the two groups.

1987. In addition, specific elements related to the growth and spread of political Islam will be examined in this section, including the principal factors that account for the Islamists' rise, the role Islamic institutions played in their growth, the Islamists' evolving relationship with the PLO, and the principal bases of their social support.

In the second section, the Islamic movement in Palestine - from the time of the Muslim Brotherhood through the growth of Hamas - will be examined through a Gramscian methodological framework. By examining both the Palestinian Islamists' conceptualization of society and the 'state,'[2] and by demonstrating that the Islamists are essentially constructing a counter-hegemonic bloc in opposition to the PLO, it will be shown that Gramsci provides the most appropriate framework through which to explain the phenomenon of political Islam in Palestine. Through their similar utilization of ideology, organization, and long-term strategy, the Muslim Brotherhood and their off-shoot Hamas approximate much of what Gramsci himself argues regarding the building of a successful revolutionary movement to overthrow the current hegemon. Consequently, Gramsci's methodology may not only explain why the Islamists were initially successful in their endeavour, but more importantly, why Hamas continues to see its support decline, especially since the signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993. In other words, a Gramscian methodological framework is equally valid in demonstrating why a specific counter-hegemonic force may either succeed or fail.

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[2]. It must be noted that in this instance Palestine remains unique from all other Muslim countries because Palestine remains essentially a colony of Israel. Therefore, any reference to the 'State' refers, for the most part, towards the PLO, though the author freely admits that the PLO does not possess many of the autonomous powers we recognize as normally being held by the modern state. See Jean- Francois Legrain, "HAMAS: Legitimate Heir of Palestinian Nationalism?" in *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?* ed. John L. Esposito (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1997), p. 159.

THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL ISLAM IN PALESTINE

The history of political Islam in the British mandated region of Palestine - now confined to the West Bank and Gaza Strip - can be divided into four separate stages. The first period is from roughly 1929[3] until the first Arab-Israeli War in 1948. The second is in the aftermath of the first Israeli-Arab War, when 'Palestine' was divided between Egypt (the Gaza Strip) and Jordan (the West Bank) from 1948-1967. The third stage, 1967-1987, represented a period of substantial growth for political Islam as it sought to present itself as a legitimate alternative to the mainstream Palestinian nationalist organization, the PLO. Finally, 1987 signalled the beginning of the *intifada* against Israeli rule and coincided with the Muslim Brotherhood's decision, for the first time, to openly and sometimes violently confront Israeli occupation. It was for this very purpose that Hamas was created as an ostensibly separate organization from the Brotherhood. Through this change in strategy, in Gramscian terms, the Islamists in Palestine realized that it was time to transform their strategy from a 'war of position' to one more closely approximating a 'war of movement.'

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[3]. The author chooses 1929 because it represents the first serious riots against British rule and the beginning of a recognition by Palestinians of the potential consequences of increased Jewish immigration into the region.

The Muslim Brotherhood, as the first Islamic movement in Palestine, dates back to 1935. In Chapter 1, it was shown how Hasan al-Banna first established the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928. In 1935, as part of his universal approach to the Islamic question, Hasan al-Banna sent his brother Abd al-Rahman to establish contacts with the local population in Palestine.[4]

The Muslim Brotherhood first came to prominence in Palestine during the Arab Revolts of 1936-39. Throughout the mandate period the Palestinians used a strategy of boycotts and strikes against British colonial rule to protest what they perceived as harmful policies towards the Arab majority. The principal area of dispute was the issue of increased Jewish immigration into Palestine. Therefore, the early activities of the Brotherhood in Palestine should be viewed as primarily those of an anti-colonial or resistance force fighting against British rule.[5] In addition, since one of the cornerstones of the Brotherhood's ideology was its strident anti-Western stance - as derived from al-Banna - it exhibited these anti-Western beliefs, especially in terms of its propaganda against the British occupiers.[6] Yet, though the Muslim Brotherhood was involved in propaganda and sometimes even open assaults against British and Jewish forces, as early as the 1930s, the Muslim Brotherhood received a considerable amount of support through its establishment of schools and social welfare centres throughout British-ruled Palestine.[7]

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[4]. Ziad Abu-Amr, "Hamas: A Historical and Political Background," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 22, no.4 (September 1993): 5-19, p. 6.

[5]. Hisham H. Ahmad, *Hamas: From Religious Salvation to Political Transformation* (PASSIA, 1994), p. 9.

While the Second World War led to a lull in the fighting between the various factions within Palestine - British, Jewish, and Arab - in the immediate post-war period the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood began to receive increased support within Palestinian society for its willingness to confront its opponents. In response to this increased recognition, the Muslim Brotherhood announced its constitution in Jerusalem in 1945. According to Hillel Frisch, based on the bitter legacy of the British occupation, it is not surprising that

> one of the declared aims of the movement was 'the patriotic nationalist goal, the striving for saving Palestine and self-guarding the well-being of the parts of the Arab and Islamic homeland and the striving in the realization of Arab unity and the Arab league through lawful means.'[8]

As a predecessor of the more radical Hamas movement, the Muslim Brotherhood has always realized the importance of combining Islam and nationalism. Consequently, it remains this mix of religious and social conservatism along with its self-declaration as a political force of national liberation that performed a crucial role in the Islamists' popularity.

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[6]. Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza: Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 1.

[7]. Charles W. Holmes, "Hamas," *The Edmonton Journal*, March 9, 1996. p. H2.

[8]. Hillel Frisch, "The Evolution of Palestinian Islamic Doctrine: Territorializing a Universal Religion," *Canadian Review of Studies in*

The turning point for the Muslim Brothers in Palestine coincided with the catastrophic losses suffered by the Palestinians in the 1948 war. While the Muslim Brothers did not participate overwhelmingly in the war - estimates range between 500 to 1500 volunteers[9] - no other political group received as much publicity or attention for their willingness to confront the Zionist opponent.[10] As a result, its active participation in the 1948 war legitimized the movement and heightened its recognition and support within Palestinian society more than all previous activities and policies over the preceding decade. By 1948, this increased popularity had led to the creation of about 25 Brotherhood branches within Palestine with membership approaching 20,000.[11]

In the period 1948-1967, two specific trends were apparent in the development of the Muslim Brotherhood. First, in the two portions of Palestine not captured by the Israelis - the Gaza Strip was administered by Egypt, while the West Bank was annexed outright by Jordan - the treatment experienced by each separate area led to the development of two fundamentally different Palestinian Islamic movements. Consequently, the harsher treatment endured by the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza at

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Nationalism 21, nos.1-2 (1994): 45-55, p. 48.

[9]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 2.

[10]. Ibid., p. 2.

[11]. Ibid., p. 3.

the hands of the Egyptian regime, as opposed to the more cordial relations enjoyed by the Islamists in the West Bank, is still seen as the principal factor accounting for the generally more radical tendencies of the contemporary Islamic movement in Gaza than in the West Bank. Second, this period represented the low ebb in support for the Islamists in Palestine and elsewhere as Pan-Arabism and Arab socialism were seen as more appropriate solutions to the problems confronting the states of the Middle East.

As stated above, the two separate branches of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood experienced very different relations with their 'adopted' states, and hence, suffered very contrasting fates. In Egypt, both the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood centred in Gaza and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood came out of the 1948 war with soaring popularity. While Nasser originally used the popular support of the Muslim Brotherhood to his own advantage in seizing power in a coup in 1952, by 1954, with the Brotherhood's popularity threatening his own power base, Nasser used the pretext of an assassination attempt on his life to repress the Brotherhood. Nasser consequently embarked on a policy of imprisoning, torturing, and executing the Brotherhood's leaders in his attempt to crush the Islamist opposition.[12] As a result of Nasser's repression, the fortunes of the Muslim Brotherhood declined significantly after 1954.[13] According to Abu-Amr:

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[12] Patrick Martin, "Death Holds No Fear For Muslim Militants," *The Globe and Mail*, May 12, 1995. p. A8. In Chapter 1, it was examined how Nasser's treatment toward one such member of the Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb, led to his pursuing more radical alternatives in his struggle against the Egyptian regime.

> After being a party that enjoyed the sympathy of the government as well as freedom of movement and organization, the Muslim Brothers were chased down and the development of their organization was impeded due to the restrictions imposed on them.[14]

The Muslim Brothers continued to suffer throughout the Nasserist era, eventually being forced underground in the Gaza Strip in the face of continuing hostility.

In the West Bank, the Muslim Brotherhood was able to develop much more cordial relations with the regime in Amman than those that existed between the Islamists and their Egyptian masters. The primary reason had less to do with the Brotherhood's activities in the West Bank - as was the case in the Gaza Strip - than with the internal politics of the Jordanian regime itself. Consequently, unlike the situation in Egypt where the Brotherhood and the Nasser regime vied for power, King Hussein coopted the Jordanian Brotherhood and used them to strengthen his own power base. He even went so far as to recognize them as a legal non-political organization.[15] According to Musa Budeiri regarding this more cordial relationship exhibited in Jordan:

> The Muslim Brotherhood movement had attached itself to the Hashemites soon after the Jordanian occupation of the West Bank... With the banning of all political activity in Jordan after the royal coup in 1957, the regime came to rely increasingly on the Brotherhood, the only organized political group to support it.[16]

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[13]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 9.

[14]. Ibid., p. 8.

[15]. Ibid., p. 4.

[16]. Musa K. Budeiri, "The Nationalist Dimension of Islamic Movements in Palestinian Politics," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 24, no.3 (Spring 1995): 89-95, p. 92.

Therefore, in much the same way that antagonism and competition for power led to repression in Egypt, in Jordan the Brotherhood and the regime were able to cooperate through a coalescing of interests. In many ways, these past developments mirror contemporary realities as the Islamists in Jordan remain a type of 'loyal opposition,' while the Mubarak regime continues to repress its own Islamist groups, both moderate and radical alike.

In addition to the two very different experiences of the Islamists and the development of what were essentially two separate Palestinian Brotherhoods in this period, this era also represented a general ebbing of political Islam both in Palestine and throughout the Middle East. There were three factors that accounted for the general decline in the appeal of the Palestinian Islamists during this period. The first was the aforementioned constant repression suffered by the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt proper and the Gaza Strip during Nasser's reign.

The second factor accounting for the Islamists' decline was the strong secular trend present at this time within Palestinian society. In one sense, this is illustrated by the large proportion of Christian Palestinians.[17] Approximately ten percent of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories are Christian. In response to this fact, the political leadership

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[17] See Ghada Talhami, "Islamic Fundamentalism and the Palestinians," *The Muslim World* 78, Nos.3-4 (July-October 1988): 173-188. pp. 174-177, and 187.

of the PLO has always stressed that any future Palestinian State would be secular in nature. This is agreed upon by all factions, even the more radical factions under the PLO umbrella such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), which in fact, garner a large degree of their support from Palestinian Christians. Consequently, not only have both the Palestinian elites and society in general remained strongly secular in their orientation, but the strict and conservative social outlook of the Islamists always created anxiety among large segments of Palestinian society.[18]

The third reason is that this period represented the high tide of Arab socialism, especially after Nasser's confrontation with the West during the Suez crisis in 1956. According to Don Peretz:

> This was the era of power for the Ba'athists, Nasserites, and Arab Socialists, who emphasized their secular orientation and perceived the Brotherhood and other fundamentalists as reactionary and outmoded.[19]

In the opinion of many, the Arab Socialists - especially those under Nasser's anti-colonial direction - were seen as primarily responsible for the rise of the Arab world. The view was shared that Islam was a remnant of another time, not unlike the evolution of Christianity in Europe, in which religion was perceived as a private affair, separated from the actual day-to-day workings of the State.

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[18]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 128.

[19]. Don Peretz, "Secular-Religious Tension Within the Palestinian Resistance Movement," *Middle East Focus* 12, no.3 (Fall 1990): 13-17, p. 14.

One further point should be mentioned with respect to this period. It should be emphasized that the Muslim Brotherhood did not as yet participate in the type of armed resistance against Israel that other Palestinian groups, such as the PLO, had already embarked upon in the mid 1960s. At this time, the Muslim Brotherhood still championed a strategy of evolutionary change which sought to transform Palestinian civil society from within, while bringing it into accordance with the principles of Islam and the rule of the *Sharia*. Therefore, in this period, the Muslim Brothers assumed the view that the foundations of an Islamic society must first be created, primarily through Islamic education, before *jihad* could be legitimately and successfully undertaken.[20] In summarizing this period and its effects on the Muslim Brotherhood, Ahmad states:

> The rise of the Nationalists and Baathist parties in the late 1950s led to a loss of support, and as the Brotherhood got weaker ... it modified its agenda for Palestinian society, focusing in the 1960s on a process of non-violent activities, distribution of pamphlets and social and religious gatherings.[21]

It is not surprising that 1967 marks a watershed year and the beginning of the third stage in the history of the Islamic movement in Palestine. As previously mentioned in Chapter 2, the devastating effect the Six-Day War had on all the Arab populations of the Middle East cannot be underestimated, and this was especially true for the Palestinians. To reiterate this point Don Peretz states:

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[20] Robert Satloff, "Islam in the Palestinian Uprising," *Orbis* 33, no.3 (Summer 1989): 389-401, p. 396.

[21] Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 15.

> June 1967 was a turning point in the ideological orientation of Palestinians and the Arab world at large. The *Nakba* or "disastrous defeat" of the collective Arab armies by Israel, discredited the dominant ideologies of the day. Nasserism, Arab Socialism, Baathism, etc...[22]

As much as the success of these ideologies had prevented the growth of political Islam prior to 1967, the discredit brought to these secular ideologies by the crushing defeat exacted at the hands of the Israelis was a primary cause in the rise of political Islam after 1967.[23] Abu-Amr reiterates the fundamental nature of this event as a turning point when he states:

> The Islamic groups also grew because supporters of these groups spread the argument that Israel's victory was a result of the adherence of the Jews to their religion, and that the Arabs' defeat was caused by their failure to adhere to Islam.[24]

In other words, the Islamists were able to utilize an essentially religious argument and transform Islam into the political solution necessary in light of the vacuum created by the discredited secular ideologies. Consequently, the argument was put forth that the Muslims had been defeated because they had strayed too far from the Koran and the teachings of Muhammad and that only a return to their true roots could provide the Arabs with the salvation necessary in such dire times.

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[22]. Peretz, "Secular-Religious Tension Within the Palestinian Resistance Movement," p. 14. This argument is also put forth by Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 11, and Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 42.

[23]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 11.

[24]. Ibid., p. 12.

After the disastrous war of 1967, certain factors were crucial in accounting for the growth of the Muslim Brotherhood in this period. One of these factors was the Brotherhood's ability to penetrate Palestinian society with an ever-increasing number of Islamic institutions. According to Ahmad:

> The Islamists ... worked quietly on organizing their ranks at university campuses and other institutions where during the 1970s, they established the solid foundations needed to penetrate Palestinian society.[25]

Therefore, having spent the previous decades attempting to educate and indoctrinate the Palestinian people towards Islam, the 1970s were spent organizing institutions within Palestinian civil society that would more effectively deliver their message and, in the process, help to turn the Palestinian people away from the secular nationalism of the PLO.

In the 1970s, this desire to institutionalize the Islamic message more effectively was premised on the idea of centralization. The first such attempt was through the establishment of the *Al-Mujamma Al-Islama* (The Islamic Centre) in 1973 in Gaza by Shaykh Ahmad Yasin. Within a very brief span of time, the Centre came to dominate all religious organizations and institutions controlled by the Brotherhood.[26]

The second principal institution the Brotherhood

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[25]. Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 32.

[26]. Abu-Amr, "Hamas," p. 7.

established in Gaza for the spreading of Islamic doctrine was the Islamic University. Founded in 1978, the Islamic University in Gaza quickly became the main Muslim Brotherhood stronghold in the region. Not unexpectedly, the majority of the staff and students remain devout Brotherhood supporters.[27] It is clear that the establishment of these two key Islamic institutions played an important role in garnering the support of a considerable segment of Palestinian civil society. In fact, it is evident that the Israelis not only allowed, but even encouraged the establishment of both institutions to counter the influence of the Palestine Liberation Organization within the Occupied Territories.[28]

However, while these two large institutions helped to centralize the Islamic organization, especially in Gaza, the principal manner in which Islamic ideas and influence were spread was through the Muslim Brotherhood's extensive network of social institutions. According to Abu-Amr:

> The society founded Islamic charity associations which supervised religious schools. It also managed nursery schools and kindergartens which were usually attached to mosques. The Brotherhood also established neighbourhood libraries and sports clubs.[29]

By the end of the 1970s, the Muslim Brotherhood was now providing many of the social services formerly administered and financed by the PLO. Its ability to influence the youngest

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[27]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 17.

[28]. *The Economist*, December 18, 1992. p. 40.

[29]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, pp. 14-15. Also see Legrain who examines the important function the universities and charitable organizations performed under the Brotherhood's tutelage in spreading the Islamic message. Legrain, "Hamas," p. 163.

segments of Palestinian society through its network of nursery schools and kindergartens is apparently garnering some success. A recent survey on social attitudes in the territories "revealed consistently more religious consciousness among young Palestinian women aged 15 to 19 than among women aged 20 to 29."[30]

Of course, the primary institution employed by the Brotherhood to disseminate their Islamic doctrine was the mosque.[31] The mosque became especially important in this period as the centre of political and organizational resistance to Israeli occupation. The main reason was that, as religious sanctuaries, the mosques generally were not subject to interference from Israeli authorities. Consequently, from the pulpit the Muslim Brotherhood could make political pronouncements, organize dissent, or discuss strategy for their followers.[32] In fact, probably the best indication of the growth of Islam in the hearts and minds of the average Palestinian during this period (1967-1987) was the phenomenal growth in the number of mosques in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip. From 1967 to 1987, the number of mosques in the Gaza Strip tripled from 200 to 600, and nearly doubled in the West

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[30]. Graham Usher, "Women, Islam, and the law in Palestinian society," *Middle East International*, 23 September, 1994. p. 17.

[31]. The crucial role the mosque has played in increasing the Islamists' support was, of course, already examined in terms of the general phenomenon of political Islam in the Middle East (see Chapter 2).

[32]. See Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 77, and Satloff, "Islam in the Palestinian Uprising," p. 399.

Bank increasing from 400 to 750.[33]

The second factor accounting for the growth of the Muslim Brotherhood during the 1970s was the harsh conditions of Israeli occupation. While the Palestinians had clearly suffered under the dual rule of Egypt and Jordan, this experience paled in comparison to life under Israeli occupation. Living under the occupation of a foreign power is never a pleasant affair regardless of the propaganda of the ruling power, and the Palestinians suffered as much as any colonized people. Not only did the Palestinians have little influence over their most basic needs, such as education, health, and social services, the Palestinian people were subjected to various harsh Israeli measures. These measures included land expropriation (over 60% of the land in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been confiscated by Israeli officials), collective punishments (including house demolition), deportation, the usurping of Palestinian water (preventing widespread agriculture) and continuing Palestinian economic dependence. Since 1967, the Palestinians have continued to provide cheap migrant labour for the Israelis, while providing an open market for Israeli consumer goods. Of course, the Muslim Brotherhood readily exploited these dire conditions for its own popular gain. As Abu-Amr states, the Brotherhood made the argument that "Israeli occupation is ... a curse or punishment from God because the Palestinians have left the true path of Islam."[34]

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[33]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 15.

During the occupation, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have clearly suffered more than their compatriots in the West Bank. This in turn, has continued to make the Gaza Strip much more fertile ground for the type of 'radical' solutions proposed by the Islamic movements.[35] A number of authors emphasize the effect the particular harshness of life in Gaza has had in creating a receptive audience for the Islamists' message. For example, according to Abu-Amr:

> The dense population, poverty, and harsh conditions, together with traditional social relationships, have provided a propitious climate for the followers of the Islamic movement to gain influence.[36]

This is true even in the contemporary environment where the harsh existence of people in the Gaza Strip - especially those who still live in refugee camps - continues to make this compact region a bastion of Islamic support.

A third factor which led to the rise of the Islamic alternative during the 1970s and into the early 1980s was the inability of the mainstream PLO to make any appreciable gains for its Palestinian constituencies.[37] As early as 1974, Yasir

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[34]. Ibid., p. 19.

[35]. This harsh treatment is, of course, in addition to the repression endured at the hands of the Nasserist regime and rule under Egypt (1948-67). Consequently, both these experiences continue to provide the Islamists with much greater support in the Gaza Strip than the West Bank.

[36]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, pp. 20-21. Peretz writes of the effects of "deteriorating economic and social conditions" and "crowded living conditions." Peretz, "Secular-Religious Tensions Within the Palestinian Resistance Movement," p. 14. Also see Talhami, "sprawling refugee camps," Talhami, "Islamic Fundamentalism and the Palestinians," pp. 184-185, and Ahmad, "Gazans more conservative and traditional outlook," Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 36.

[37]. Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 33.

Arafat - as head of the PLO - had made the fundamental decision to abandon armed conflict and to seek a two-state solution through negotiation and mediation. Yet, by 1982-83, with the organization's banishment from Lebanon in the face of the Israeli onslaught, it was clear that the PLO's decade-long strategy had garnered no clear benefits for the Palestinian people. According to Abu-Amr:

> The failure of the PLO to deliver on its declared objectives, the problems that the organization faced in Jordan and Lebanon, the frequent changes of its political positions, the corruption and inefficiency attributed to its institutions and leaders affected the images of the PLO in the minds of the masses in a negative way.[38]

Consequently, Abu-Amr demonstrates how

> a certain disillusionment had begun to spread with regard to the Palestinian resistance movement, making the population more amenable to alternative political and ideological approaches.[39]

Therefore, while the 1967 War had initially helped promote the idea of Islam as a possible counter political ideology because it had not been tarred by the brush of power, by the early 1980s, political Islam in the Occupied Territories had become a legitimate theoretical alternative to the mainstream PLO.[40] Consequently, the Islamists reaped success as the PLO failed to sow the seeds of solutions for the Palestinian people.

A final factor accounting for the growth of political Islam in this period was the impact of external or outside factors. The late 1970s and early 1980s were a time when political

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[38]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 13.

[39]. Abu-Amr, "Hamas," p. 7.

[40]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 14.

Islam - or Islamic 'fundamentalism' as deemed by the West - was seen to be achieving success at the expense of the more Western-oriented regimes in the region. As Iyad Barghouti argues:

> The political rise of the Islamists here in Palestine has been influenced by outside factors - the Iranian revolution, Hizballah attacks on Israel, the Islamist movement in Egypt.[41]

In each case - the overthrow of the pro-Western Shah of Iran, the assassination of US-backed Anwar Sadat by al-Jihad, or the casualties inflicted on withdrawing Israeli troops in Lebanon (in addition to the successful suicide bombings of Western troops and embassies) - these events represented a victory for radical Islam and a setback for the 'moderate' and western-oriented views of the nationalist PLO.

It was clear that by the early 1980s the Islamists were gaining strength at the expense of the more nationalist, PLO-supported factions within the Occupied Territories. While this period confirmed the continued growth of an Islamic alternative it also represented a low point in the history of the nationalist movement, with the PLO on the defensive and its remaining forces in Lebanon disintegrating into civil war. The growing stature of the Islamic movement was most visibly demonstrated by the ever-increasing number of confrontations between the two blocs. According to Abu-Amr:

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[41]. Iyad Barghouti, "The Islamist Movements in the Occupied Territories," *Middle East Report 183*, vol.23, no.4 (July-August 1993): 9-12, p. 10. The influence of outside factors is also asserted by Meir Litvak, "Palestinian Nationalism and Islam: The Case of Hamas," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 2, no.4 (Winter 1996): 500-522, p. 503 and Abu-Amr, "Hamas," p. 7.

> One of the worst manifestations of the deteriorating relationship between the PLO and the Muslim Brotherhood was the violent confrontations and clashes that took place between the two sides. These clashes occurred in more than one place in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and especially in the Palestinian universities.[42]

The worst of these confrontations occurred in the Gaza Strip in May 1983, with the loss of life and numerous injuries reported on both sides. In the West Bank, major clashes occurred at two of the largest universities, An-Najah in Nablus, most of whose leaders were Muslim, and Bir-Zeit in Ramallah, which was administered predominately by Palestinians of Christian origin.[43] Consequently, by the mid 1980s, the divisions that would be exacerbated by the intifada and the eventual 'peace process' were clear. The two blocs - the nationalist and the Islamic - were clearly institutionally entrenched and as such, now prepared to do battle for the hearts and souls of the Palestinian people.

When long simmering tensions finally exploded into a large-scale Palestinian uprising on December 9 1987 - known as the *intifada* or 'shaking off' of Israeli rule - the resulting conflict presented the Muslim Brotherhood with a fundamental dilemma. Prior to this time, the Brotherhood had always argued that preparing Palestinian society, or, more appropriately, laying the foundations for an Islamic society must be given precedence, before a violent confrontation with their Israeli occupiers could be contemplated.[44] In other words, according to Ahmad: "The liberation of Palestine in the mind of the Brotherhood was to be considered only after liberating the people socially, or only after returning them to the 'right path' of Islam."[45]

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[42]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 43. Also see Lisa Taraki, "The Islamic Resistance Movement in the Palestinian Uprising," *Middle East Report* 156, vol.19, no.1 (January-February 1989): 30-32, p. 30.

[43]. Peretz, "Secular-Religious Tensions Within the Palestinian Resistance Movement," p. 15.

However, this perceived lack of willingness to openly confront their occupiers had been a source of constant criticism from both members of the more secular PLO and more radical Islamists.[46] Therefore, at the time of the outbreak of the *intifada*, the greatest fear within the Muslim Brotherhood was that, by refusing to actively and openly participate in the uprising, the Muslim Brotherhood would become increasingly irrelevant to its constituency and forfeit whatever gains it had achieved over the previous 20 years. It was within this context that the Brotherhood eventually decided to create a more activist organization in the guise of Hamas. In this sense, the Brotherhood was not only attempting to mobilize support in its competition with the nationalist groups (i.e., the PLO), but also to prevent losing additional support to more militant Islamic groups, such as Islamic Jihad.

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[44]. As will be examined more closely below in terms of the Palestinians' long-term strategy, this idea corresponds very closely to Gramsci's idea of a 'war of position.'

[45]. Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 17. Also see Satloff who states that it the desire of the Brotherhood to seek "evolutionary change over radical revolution." Satloff, "Islam in the Palestinian Uprising," p. 396.

[46]. In fact, many Palestinians had already turned their back on the Brotherhood because of its perceived passivity to form the Islamic Jihad movement in the early 1980s. In terms of the activism of Islamic Jihad and its effects on the Brotherhood, see Budeiri, "The Nationalist Dimension of Islamic Movements in Palestinian Politics," p. 91, Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 38, Satloff, "Islam in the Palestinian Uprising," p. 396, and Legrain, "Hamas," p. 160.

While many members of the Brotherhood quickly recognized its dilemma, it took them a number of weeks after the outbreak of the *intifada* to appropriate a definitive stance towards the uprising. Consequently, the creation of Hamas was not a clear-cut decision, but in fact, evolved over a period of time.[47] Essentially, the greatest stumbling bloc to arriving at an immediate decision was the deep-seated divisions within the organization between the older, more moderate members and the younger, more radical Islamists. Thus, according to Abu-Amr, during the first month of the *intifada*

> the question debated was whether it was incumbent upon the society to delay the *jihad* against the Israeli occupation until an Islamic society is founded or whether it was the Brotherhood's duty to enter into the confrontation immediately. Traditional Brotherhood leaders were not enthusiastic about an early participation in the intifada, but the young leaders were able to impose their will and vision in this regard.[48]

Thus, the debate in many ways revolved around those moderates who wanted to continue a 'war of position' as opposed to those younger members who were prepared to embark on a 'war of movement' and finally confront their oppressors in a more open and direct fashion.

When the decision was finally reached that some type of participation was necessary to deflect the long heard criticisms levelled at the Brotherhood that it had been too passive in the face of continuing Israeli repression, it was left to Sheikh Ahmad Yasin to address this dilemma.[49] In other words, the problem he confronted was "to find a way to join the *intifada* without putting their [the individuals'] future and the future of the movement in jeopardy."[50] Consequently, Yasin felt that the only way to avoid compromising the future of the Muslim Brotherhood - an organization that had been built up with such painstaking effort and personal sacrifice - and to avoid any potential retribution from Israeli authorities, was to create an ostensibly separate organization out of the Muslim Brotherhood to take responsibility for participation in the intifada.[51] According to Abu-Amr:

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[47]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 63.

[48]. Ibid., p. 83. Ahmad also demonstrates that the creation of Hamas by the Muslim Brotherhood was initially an attempt to "relieve the internal strife and satisfy competing positions within the movement." Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 19.

> The Muslim Brotherhood probably thought that in the case the intifada failed, Hamas would take the blame. But if it persisted, the Brotherhood could claim Hamas, as it did a few months later when the charter of Hamas was issued [August 1988] declaring the Islamic Resistance Movement as a wing of the Muslim Brotherhood Society in Palestine.[52]

Thus, by January 1988, a clear decision had been reached on participating in the *intifada* and the first leaflet was issued under the name of Hamas.[53]

The more activist and confrontational stance of the Islamists, as demonstrated by Hamas, was immediately apparent.

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[49]. Yasin had come to fame as the principal founder of the Islamic Centre in 1973. See *The Economist*, December 19, 1992. p. 40.

[50]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 67.

[51]. See Abu-Amr, "Hamas," p. 11, and Satloff, "Islam in the Palestinian Uprising," p. 396.

[52]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, pp. 67-68.

[53]. However, many in the Brotherhood still regard December 14 1987 - when they issued a statement calling on the Palestinian people to stand up to Israeli occupation - as the true birth of the Hamas movement. Abu-Amr, "Hamas," p. 10. For others, such as Hisham Ahmad, he states that the Muslim Brotherhood did not claim Hamas as their military wing until May 1988. Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 19.

On many occasions, the pronouncements of the new Islamic force appeared to be odds with those being espoused by the secular and moderate forces of the PLO and their allies within the territories, the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNL). The first clear cut example of this new, more intense competition developing between the secular and Islamic blocs during the early days of the intifada were the leaflets being distributed by Hamas. According to Abu-Amr:

> They [the pamphlets] reiterate the political goals and positions of the Muslim Brotherhood that are at odds with those of the UNL, especially Hamas's opposition to the idea of establishing a Palestinian state on a part of Palestine and concluding peace with Israel or recognizing it.[54]

Consequently, throughout the early months of the *intifada*, while the Palestinian people were exhibiting a more unified stance in general, the Islamists were demonstrating crucial differences of ideology, organization, and strategy from the more secularist participants in the *intifada* (i.e., Fatah, PFLP, DFLP, PCP- PPP).[55] This in turn, continued to exacerbate the tensions already present between the two rival Palestinian blocs.

The key document that helped to most clearly explain Hamas' ideology, aims, and strategy - the Hamas Charter - was released on August 18 1988. One of the most important repercussions of the Charter was that it helped to clarify the fundamental differences that existed between the secular and Islamic forces within Palestine. According to Peretz:

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[54]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 78.

[55]. See Peretz, "Secular-Religious Tension Within the Palestinian

> The Hamas Covenant is so fundamentally at odds with the ideology, tactics, and strategy of the PLO that a permanent relationship seems out of the question... Moreover, the raison d'etre of Hamas - the establishment of an Islamic state in all of Palestine - contradicts the new political program recently adopted by the PLO mainstream calling for a "two-state solution" to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.[56]

The Charter itself does explicitly allude to Hamas' relationship to, and views of, the mainstream PLO. In fact, it specifically refers to the Hamas - PLO relationships as that "of a son toward his father, and the brother toward his brother, and the relative toward his relative" and states that "our nation is one, plight is one, destiny is one, and our enemy is the same..."[57] Furthermore, the Charter also states that "all nationalist elements working in the arena for the sake of liberating Palestine should be assured that it is a helper and supporter and will never be anything but that..."[58]

However, the Charter is also very clear regarding some of the fundamental differences that exist between Hamas and the mainstream secular PLO. With reference to 'liberating Palestine,' Hamas rejects the two-state solution and any negotiation with, or recognition of, the State of Israel. In fact, Article 13 states that "as far as the ideology of the Islamic Resistance Movement is concerned, giving up any part

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Resistance Movement," pp. 15-16, and Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 51.

[56]. Peretz, "Secular-Religious Tension Within the Palestinian Resistance Movement," p. 16.

[57]. See Charter of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) of Palestine, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 22, no.4 (Summer 1993): 122-134, Article 27.

[58]. Ibid., Article 25.

of Palestine is like giving up part of its religion."[59] Furthermore, with specific reference to the Palestine Liberation Organization, Article 27 of the Charter asserts that

> we cannot exchange the current and future of Islam in Palestine to adopt the secular ideology because the Islamic nature of the Palestinian issue is part and parcel of our *din* (ideology and way of life) and whosoever neglects part of his din is surely lost.[60]

Therefore, by fundamentally opposing the PLO over the nature of the future Palestinian state (secular or Islamic), the shape of that future state (two-state or all of Palestine), and the means to the creation of that state (negotiation with Israel or jihad against Israel), it is clear that the PLO and the Islamists are offering their fellow citizens two very different and alternative visions of the future. With specific reference to the Charter, Ahmad makes this competitive nature of the relationship clear.

> While careful to document understanding of the secular vision and articulate that all are united in a common aim it nevertheless states that Hamas will not be one with the PLO until the latter adopts Islam as its way of life.[61]

Therefore, it is obvious that one of the principal aims sought in the declaration of its Charter was to allow Hamas to present itself as a clear alternative to the current hegemonic position of the PLO within Palestinian society, especially in terms of the continuing struggle against Israeli occupation.[62]

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[59]. Ibid., Article 13.

[60]. Ibid., Article 27.

[61]. Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 61.

[62]. Abu-Amr, "Hamas," p. 13.

Within two years of the outbreak of the *intifada*, Hamas appeared to be making some spectacular gains in terms of its support within Palestinian society. As early as December 1989, Israeli intelligence officers were predicting that Hamas would win 30% of the vote in a free election.[63] This growth occurred in spite of the fact that on September 28 1989 the Hamas movement was formally outlawed by the Israelis, and Shaykh Yasin, seven other senior leaders, and over 200 leading activists were arrested.[64]

It is clear that by the late 1980s Hamas had destroyed the old image of the Brotherhood as a passive resister to Israeli occupation and had been successful in more actively presenting itself to the Palestinian people as a force of national liberation. This pronounced change in the Palestinian environment is asserted by Abu-Amr.

> Clearly the *intifada* had upset the old balance of power and the Islamic movement had become a political force that could not be ignored. Hamas has become a formidable rival to the PLO factions in the Occupied Territories.[65]

Therefore, for the first time in the short history of the Palestine Liberation Organization it was being seriously challenged for its self-proclaimed position as 'the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.'

The continued growth of the Islamic movement in the early 1990s was linked to a number of factors. Most surprisingly, this growth continued in spite of the persistent repression of its leadership and activist membership. There are perhaps three principal factors that contributed to the spectacular growth of Hamas in this period.

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[63]. *The Economist*, December 2, 1989. p. 47.

[64]. See Meir Litvak, "The West Bank and Gaza Strip," in *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, ed. Ami Ayalon (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1989), p. 240.

[65]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 71.

The first factor was its ability to continue to exploit the popular support garnered by the traditional welfare and social service networks that had been established by the Muslim Brotherhood. For Ali Al Jarbawi, the provision of an efficient network of social services was a crucial element in acquiring additional support for Hamas. Consequently, as a result of

> its development of an effective organizational structure within the occupied territories, particularly in regard to the provision of basic services and necessities to those who reside there ... Hamas was able to set up a well organized and effective network that extended from kindergartens to universities, from mobile health units to youth clubs to centres for study and research. Then, by means of this far-reaching network within Palestinian society, many developing segments of that society grew into relationships of dependence upon Hamas.[66]

The increasing degree of dependence of many Palestinians upon the services of Hamas became even more pronounced after financial aid was severed to the PLO by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States in retaliation for Arafat's support of Iraq during the Gulf War. Consequently, by the early 1990s, Hamas had gained a reputation for running the most efficient social service network in the Occupied Territories, especially in the

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[66]. Ali Al Jarbawi, "The Position of Palestinian Islamists on the Palestine-Israel Accord," *The Muslim World* 84, nos.1-2 (January-April 1994): 127-154, p. 136. Serge Schemann concurs with this view when he states: "Typically, a poor Palestinian family in the West Bank might send a child to a Hamas school on a Hamas bus, use a Hamas clinic for about $1 a visit, play soccer at a Hamas sports club, and, if really needy, get a weekly ration of rice from Hamas." Serge Schemann, "Hamas at War with the Peace Plan," *The Globe and Mail*, March 4, 1996. p. A7.

Gaza Strip.[67] Therefore, while Hamas's reputation in the West remained essentially that of a terrorist organization, one of the crucial factors accounting for its increased support in the 1990s was its ability to provide Palestinian civil society with the basic needs that others (i.e., the PLO) either refused, or simply were unable, to provide.[68]

The second factor that contributed to the growth in public support for Hamas in this period was the general disillusionment among Palestinians regarding the inability of the PLO to bring about any tangible improvements in the average life of the people. These feelings were even prominent among secular Palestinians who believed the PLO was not offering them enough assistance in their resistance to Israeli rule.[69] The lack of significant progress during the Madrid negotiations, which began in October 1991, seemed to illustrate the feelings of disenchantment and hopelessness felt by most Palestinians. As a result, it was Hamas - through its rejection of the peace process - which gained the most as the process continued to falter. According to Yezid Sayigh:

> The failure of the Palestinian negotiating team to obtain tangible changes in the daily lives of the people under Israeli military occupation has lent credence to the Hamas argument and steadily undermined the credibility of the PLO which authorised participation in the peace process.[70]

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[67] Sarah Roy as quoted in Ahmad Rashad, *The Truth About Hamas*, p. 4.

[68] A senior Israeli military officer who studies Hamas stated that 95 per cent of the $60-million to $70-million (U.S.) that the movement raises annually goes for "civilian" activities, compared with only 5 per cent for military purposes. Schemann, "Hamas at War with the Peace Plan," p. A7.

[69] Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 55.

[70] Yezid Sayigh, "Feeding violence in the occupied territories: Hamas or Rabin?" *Middle East International*, 22 January, 1993. p. 17. Also

Quite simply, the situation reached the point that, as peace seemed more remote and the PLO's moderate stance became more out of step with the reality of life in the Occupied Territories, the position of Hamas continued to gain credibility.[71]

In September 1992, Hamas crystallized its 'rejectionist' stance by fronting a ten-faction group of Palestinian parties opposed to the continued participation of the PLO in the Madrid 'sham.' While parties both within the PLO umbrella-organization - the PFLP and the DFLP - and outside - the Islamic Jihad - were represented, it was clear that Hamas was the dominant group within this newly formed rejectionist coalition, as well as the single largest of all the factions represented. As a result, by September 1992:

> [B]y offering an alternative political program that rejected the peace process, and by expanding its organizational infrastructure in the territories at the expense of the PLO's network ... [Hamas] emerged as the most serious challenge yet to the PLO's claim of exclusive representation of the Palestinian people.[72]

The third factor that accounted for the growth of Hamas in this period was its ability to adopt the revolutionary slogans and tactics abandoned by the PLO, which for Hamas and its supporters seemed more appropriate to the daily experiences of

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putting forth this argument are Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 74, Jarbawi, "The Position of Palestinian Islamists on the Palestine-Israel Accord," pp. 138-139, and Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 104.

[71]. Jarbawi, "The Position of Palestinian Islamists on the Palestine-Israel Accord," p. 139.

[72]. Meir Litvak, "The Palestine Liberation Organization," in *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, ed. Ami Ayalon (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1992), p. 267.

Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories. This is especially true in an environment of occupation, where the component of violence is sometimes a necessary means to achieving one's aims. According to Abu-Amr:

> [T]he abandonment by PLO factions of ideological and revolutionary discourse and their turn to political realism and pragmatism ... created an ideological and doctrinal vacuum.[73]

Hence, in the PLO's attempts to chart a negotiated route and appease world opinion, Hamas accepted the extreme nationalist and revolutionary doctrine that had previously been the sole domain of the PLO.

For Hamas, and especially Shaikh Yasin, the opportunity created by the PLO's increased moderation permitted Hamas the chance to mesh its traditional religious conservatism with a more radical nationalist appeal. Thus, Hamas could retain its religious framework, but could now also present itself as the best alternative for national liberation in the face of a floundering secular option. In the opinion of Abu-Amr, Yasin believed that Hamas could provide a unique appeal not available to the secularists.

> The fundamentalist groups offered a special kind of activism that combined patriotism with moral purity and social action with the promise of divine grace... Not just redemption of the homeland, but the salvation of the soul.[74]

Not surprisingly, many Palestinians were drawn to the type of revolutionary doctrine promulgated by Hamas. In the view of both older radicals, who were nurtured on *jihad* and felt abandoned by the PLO's new, more moderate leanings, and younger militants, who joined Hamas during the earlier stages of the *intifada* and were educated on violent resistance, Hamas was now viewed as the only group that could achieve the fundamental aspirations of the Palestinian people.[75]

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[73]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 86.

[74]. Ibid., p. 66. This idea of combining religion (*dawa*) and nationalism or patriotism (*wataniyyah*) is seen as an essential ingredient in Hamas' success by a number of authors. Some examples include Legrain, "Hamas," p. 159, Satloff, "Islam in the Palestinian Uprising," pp. 391 and 399, and Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 60.

While support for Hamas steadily rose during this period for all the aforementioned reasons, no one event garnered Hamas as much sympathy and support as the Israeli deportation of 418 'suspected' Islamic activists in December 1992. One reason this event helped to crystallize Hamas support was because it occurred at a time when PLO involvement in peace negotiations continued to falter. The deportations themselves were enacted in an attempt to curb an increase in Hamas military activity against the Israeli authorities which seemed to be gaining Hamas additional adherents to its cause.

However, as opposed to having a negative effect, immediately after the expulsion, Hamas' popularity soared.[76] The media's depiction of the deportees stranded in 'no man's land' just inside the Lebanon border greatly enhanced the image of the Palestinians as victims of continuing Israeli repression. According to Litvak:

> The deportations at the end of 1992 boosted Hamas popularity in the territories and enhanced its image of being at the

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[75]. See *The Economist*, May 13, 1995. p. 40.

[76]. See Barghouti, "The Islamist Movements in the Occupied Territories," p. 11, Ahmad, *Hamas*, pp. 80-82, and Beverly Milton-Edwards, "Political Islam in Palestine in an environment of peace?" *Third World Quarterly* (1996): 199-225, pp. 203-204.

> forefront of the struggle against Israel. Furthermore, the strike at the Hamas organizational infrastructure, mainly at welfare and religious institutions, was perceived in the territories as an attack upon Islam itself, rallying many around the Movement.[77]

Therefore, to many Palestinians, not only did the deportations demonstrate the true futility in the PLO's misplaced hopes for a negotiated settlement, but Hamas, not the PLO, was now perceived as the vanguard in the struggle against Israeli occupation.[78]

At this point, it may be insightful to examine the actual public support Hamas was receiving throughout this period to substantiate the view that Hamas now represented a legitimate threat as a national alternative to the mainstream PLO. In this sense, its support can be measured both in terms of general surveys of public opinion and with regard to the support Hamas, or the Islamic bloc, received in various elections in the territories during this period. While there were obviously no general elections like the 'legislative' and 'executive' elections held within the territories in January 1996, elections conducted for student unions, professional associations, and chambers of commerce are equally effective in demonstrating a general pattern of increased electoral support achieved by the Islamic bloc - especially Hamas - in this period.

In terms of pure public opinion, by some estimates, support for Hamas as much as tripled during this time (1987-1993). In one of the earliest measures of Hamas' support in the Occupied Territories, backing for Hamas was placed at somewhere between 10%-15% of the Palestinian population.[79] Yet, by December 1992, in wake of the large scale deportations of Islamic activists, some experts claimed that as many as 40% of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories were now supporting Hamas, while similarly rejecting the more moderate policies of the PLO.[80] While this zenith of support may have just indicated an upsurge in sympathy for Hamas in wake of the mass deportations, even by February 1993 Hamas was still estimated to have a following of around 30-40% in the Gaza Strip and 20-25% in the West Bank.[81]

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[77]. Meir Litvak, "The Islamic Resistance Movement: Hamas," in *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, ed. Ami Ayalon (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1993), p. 195.

[78]. See Litvak, "*The Palestine Liberation Organization,*" p. 275.

It is true that public opinion surveys alone are not always an accurate indicator of a certain individual's actual voting intentions. However, a number of elections held throughout the Occupied Territories during this period confirm the increased popular support Hamas was receiving. According to Iyad Barghouti:

> In the 1992-93 elections, a systematic increase in Hamas's popularity was demonstrated, even in liberal institutions such a Bir Zeit University [in Nablus], with the group typically obtaining between 35 and 40 percent of the vote.[82]

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[79]. See *The Economist*, December 22, 1990. p. 49, and Steve Sherman, "Gazans and the intifada: united and steadfast," *Middle East International*, 13 April, 1990. p. 18.

[80]. *The Economist*, December 19, 1992. p. 39.

[81]. *The Economist*, February 20, 1993. p. 39.

[82]. Iyad Barghouti, "Islamist Movements in Palestine," in *Islamic Fundamentalism*, eds. Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (Boulder: Westview, 1996), p. 168.

While the victory at the liberal-leaning Bir Zeit surprised many PLO officials, it was the startling success of the Islamists in the Chamber of Commerce election in Ramallah in March 1992 that "sent a chill down nationalist spines" because Ramallah was a heavily Christian centre and had always been a nationalist stronghold.[83]

However, in the opinion of Elie Rekhess, the PLO defeat in Ramallah should not be seen as an aberration. Instead, it represented a systematic pattern of increased Islamic support that had been occurring ever since the PLO entered the failed Madrid peace process. According to Rekhess:

> The Ramallah defeat (Chamber of Commerce) was not the first instance in which the PLO faltered. It merely added to an expanding list of poor PLO performances in the post-Madrid elections to the Hebron Chamber of Commerce, Hebron University, the Union of Electric Company employees and the Employees' Union of the East Jerusalem Maqasid Hospital, formerly one of the PLO's most prominent strongholds.[84]

To demonstrate the degree to which the Islamic bloc was gaining in terms of its popular support, in the Fall of 1992, Mahmoud al-Zahhar examined more than 20 election campaigns conducted in the territories during 1991-92. According to Al-Zahhar, 34,221 Palestinians voted in these elections; and the Islamist candidates won 43% of the overall votes.[85]

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[83] Daoud Kuttab, "Occupied Palestine: Factional in-fighting," *Middle East International*, 20 March, 1992. p. 6.

[84]. Elie Rekhess, "The West Bank and the Gaza Strip," in *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, ed. Ami Ayalon (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1992), p. 299.

[85]. Rashad, *The Truth About Hamas*, p. 5. Also see Rekhess, though she states that the combined vote for Hamas in Dr. Al-Zahhar's study amounted to 45%. Rekhess, "The West Bank and the Gaza Strip," p. 300. Jean-Francois Legrain arrives at a similar conclusion regarding Hamas's increased support, though over a more extended period of time. According to Legrain: "In most of the professional and university elections held between 1989-1994, Hamas and Fatah obtained almost the

At this point it is evident - in terms of both public opinion and in student and professional elections - that Hamas was making impressive gains and even appeared poised to supplant the PLO as the 'legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.' According to Ahmad:

> With the talks [Madrid] leading nowhere and the PLO suffering serious economic, institutional, and administrative hardships, the popularity of the PLO was perhaps at the lowest point in its history... This, combined with the events surrounding the deportation, gave Hamas unprecedented standing.[86]

It was within this desperate environment that Arafat needed something to offer the Palestinian people in hopes of stemming the Islamic tide. That fortuitous moment occurred when the offer of limited self-rule appeared in the guise of the Oslo Peace Accords, and by the summer of 1993, Arafat jumped at the chance to finally bring some tangible peace dividends to the Palestinian people.

It is obvious that to examine the entire chronology of the post-Oslo process is well beyond the scope of this project. However, in the short-term, it is clear that the Oslo Accords served the exact purpose Yasir Arafat had intended. They prevented the continued slide of support towards the Islamists and helped to reinforce the PLO's position as the undisputed representative of the Palestinian people.[87] Almost immediately

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same results, i.e., around 40 per cent each, reflecting the ability of each party to build alliances to ensure victory." Legrain, "Hamas," p. 166.

[86]. Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 66.

[87]. According to Legrain the agreement had allowed Israel to restore "the PLO's political hegemony." Legrain, "Hamas," p. 165.

after the Accords were signed a poll showed Hamas' support dropping to 13%.[88] In addition, support for Hamas has continued to decline over the past few years, even in face of its new strategy of suicide bombings from April 1994 to March 1996. In December 1995, it was reported that Hamas' support was stuck at 15%, after a high of nearly 40% just before the Oslo Accords were signed.[89] That figure further dropped to 10% in the former stronghold of Gaza after Hamas decided to boycott the Palestinian General Elections in January 1996.[90]

Throughout this period a clear pattern has evolved. When the Accords begin to show tangible benefits on the ground, Hamas' support declines.[91] Conversely, it is not surprising that the corresponding support for both Yasir Arafat and the overall peace process continued to increase over the same period. From September 1995 to January 1996, support for Arafat climbed from 54 to 58% while backing of the Israeli-Palestinian deal rose from 66 to 72%.[92] Furthermore, both Yasir Arafat's election as President and the sweeping to power of his Fatah party in the January 1996 elections were interpreted as an overwhelming endorsement of the PLO's platform of negotiation and moderation.

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[88]. Jarbawi, "The Position of Palestinian Islamists on the Palestine-Israel Accord," p. 141.

[89]. *The Economist*, December 2, 1995. p. 41.

[90]. *The Economist*, January 5, 1996. p. 52.

[91]. Examples would include the signing of both the first and second stages of the DOP, which occurred on May 4 1994 and September 28 1995 respectively.

[92]. See *The Economist*, September 30, 1995. p. 46, and *The Economist*, January 5, 1996. p. 52.

However, is it entirely accurate at this point to assume that Hamas' power has been permanently eclipsed and that it will never again be able to challenge the supremacy of the PLO, especially the dominance of Arafat and his Fatah movement? Certain factors - of the sort which accounted for Hamas growth in the early 1990s - are still present and suggest that in spite of the recent triumphs of the PLO and the growth in support for its more moderate approach, Hamas is still far from a spent force in the Occupied Territories. In this sense, Ali Jarbawi argues: "Operating in an environment still highly receptive to its message, it cannot be discounted, [and] despite recent developments, will be able to grow in the future."[93] As Arafat has realized since the signing of the Oslo Accords, Hamas can neither be eliminated nor simply wished away.

The first factor that could allow for a revival of the Islamic movement is the fact that a highly efficient network of social institutions, which still provides fundamental services for many Palestinians, remains present in the territories and continues to be administered by Hamas officials. While Arafat has been under pressure to crack down harder on these Islamic institutions, especially in wake of the February/March 1996 suicide bombings, he has so far refused, fearing a backlash from the Palestinian people and further accusations that he is collaborating with the enemy. With its social institutions still intact on the ground, Hamas can maintain its influence at the grassroots, and if the economy continues its slide the number of Palestinians dependent on Hamas for daily necessities could dramatically increase.

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[93]. Ali Al Jarbawi, "Palestinian Politics at a Crossroads," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25, no.4 (Summer 1996): 29-39, p. 33.

The second factor that may provide for an upsurge in support for Hamas involves the potential failures inherent in the Oslo process, especially if the PLO under Arafat is unable to deliver on all the promises made to the Palestinians for improving their daily lives. In other words, as much as support for Arafat and the PLO is linked to the peace process and increases when the Palestinian people believe they are receiving tangible benefits, conversely, when the peace process appears dormant and the peoples' suffering increases, the Palestinians have demonstrated their willingness to turn against a negotiated peace with Israel. As Ali Al Jarbawi observed: "Thus, swings, in Palestinian public opinion which accompanied the peace talks ... remain a factor to be reckoned with."[94]

In the past, at those times when the Oslo peace process seemed in jeopardy of self-destructing, Hamas has been able to make credible gains. In November 1993, when negotiations for the first stage of Israeli withdrawal from the territories seemed near collapse, student council elections at Bir Zeit produced a 'Rejectionist Front' coalition, with the PFLP, DFLP, and Hamas acquiring a clear majority with 52 per cent of the vote.[95] Two years later at the same university, when negotiations for the second stage of Palestinian autonomy were stalled, the rejectionists won 27 out of a total of 51 seats - Hamas alone winning 18 seats.[96] Finally, in December of 1996, in wake of Benjamin Netanyahu's ascension to power and in response to the large scale fighting that had erupted in the territories in September 1996, Hamas emerged as the leading party in student elections at the Najah University in Nablus, a traditional Fatah stronghold.[97] In each case, when the PLO and Arafat appeared unable to bring about a concrete improvement of the situation on the ground, more Palestinians were willing to consider Hamas as a legitimate alternative to the current hegemon.[98]

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[94]. Jarbawi, "The Position of Palestinian Islamists on the Palestine-Israel Accord," p. 144.

For Hamas, especially in wake of the suicide bombings in the spring of 1996 and the crushing repression that followed,[99] there may now be a greater realization within the movement that at the present time the best strategy to pursue involves a type of 'wait-and-see' attitude. At the same time, it may be more productive to return to its previous strategy of spreading the word and will of Islam throughout Palestinian civil society. In other words, in Gramscian terms, it may return to the 'war of position' it so successfully fought previous to the outbreak of the *intifada*. For it is obvious to even Hamas' most hard-line supporters that at the present time it has neither the manpower nor the weaponry to defeat two determined adversaries - the PLO and their Israeli occupiers. This 'wait and see' strategy is perhaps best summed up by Bassam Jarrar, one of 418 'alleged' Islamic activists deported in December 1992. According to Jarrar:

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[95]. Daoud Kuttab, "Frustration and anger," *Middle East International*, 3 December, 1993. pp. 5-6.

[96]. "West Bank student elections," *Middle East International*, 9 June, 1995. p. 4.

[97]. Khalid Amayreh, "Hamas gains ground," *Middle East International*, 20 December, 1996. p. 4.

[98]. It must be recalled that this was also a crucial factor accounting for Hamas' growth in the early 1990s, especially when the Madrid peace talks failed to produce any credible results.

[99]. It was estimated that by April of 1996 as many as 12,000 Hamas and Islamic Jihad activists, including their political leadership, were in PNA (Palestine National Authority) custody. Khalid Amayreh, "Tug of war," *Middle East International*, 12 April, 1996. p. 4.

> The PLO has a long history of struggle and therefore of legitimacy in Palestinian eyes, and there is currently no real alternative to it... But if it (the PLO) does disintegrate this does not mean that there is a political vacuum. The Islamic movement is there because it exists separately of the PLO, and is an integral part of Palestinian political culture.[100]

Therefore, it is possible that the battle for supremacy between the two blocs may not yet be over, and if, or when, the PLO disintegrates, Hamas has served notice that it is still determined to assume the position as the new hegemonic power in Palestine.

SOCIAL BASE OF ISLAMIST SUPPORT

Both the Muslim Brotherhood and its offshoot the Islamic

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[100]. Graham Usher and Bassam Jarrar, "The Islamist Movements in the Occupied Territories," *Middle East Report* 189, vol.24, no.4 (July-August 1994): 28-29, p. 29.

Resistance Movement (Hamas) have garnered support and constructed their membership base from a large cross-section of the Palestinian population. As examined in both Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 - regarding the initial base of support accorded Muhammad's Islamic movement - there are certain similarities between those individuals who tended to support those two groups and with respect to the segments of society that tend to be overrepresented in their support for Hamas. In all three cases, there is a definitive core of social representation.

As those earlier studies demonstrated, the Islamist movement in Palestine is not simply a conduit for the very poorest or most destitute members of society, though they are represented in significant numbers, especially in the Islamists' Gaza Strip constituency. Instead, as Chapter 2 concluded, a large percentage of the social base of various Islamic movements is comprised of members from the upper echelons of society. Furthermore, as Chapter 2 argued, the fact remains that the groups most significantly overrepresented tend to be those segments of society that feel the most 'cheated' or marginalized by the rapid process of industrialization and capitalist development that has occurred in the post World War II era. In many cases, they are among the most educated, but in terms of self-perception see themselves as having been denied certain opportunities to increase their overall social mobility. According to Richard Bulliet:

> They [the Islamists' supporters] include a

> disproportionately large number of the best educated and most intelligent young people in their respective populations. Scientists, engineers, agronomists, doctors, and western-style lawyers ... probably outnumber, formally trained mullahs and specialists on Islamic law.[101]

Other studies have also destroyed the myth that those who tend to support the Islamist groups are among the poorest and least educated segments of society. In one of the earliest surveys conducted regarding the social base of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, Abu Amr examined the movement's membership in the West Bank prior to the 1967 War. According to Abu-Amr:

> About 25 percent of the members were merchants and property owners of different kinds, while 13 percent were from the intelligentsia, 13 percent were workers, an equal percentage were farmers.[102]

A number of subsequent studies conveyed a similar message. According to David Hoffman: " ... it [Hamas] enjoys a power base that includes not only impoverished refugees, but also some of the merchant and professional elite."[103] As a consequence, Hamas' message has found a receptive audience among all segments of the population, "from doctors and lawyers to the very rich and, ... to the very poor."[104]

As originally argued in Chapter 2, the four principal bases of social support exhibited by Islamic groups in general,[105] have also been prominent in their backing of the Islamists in

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[101]. Richard W. Bulliet, "The Future of the Islamic Movement," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no.5 (November/December 1993): 38-44, p. 42.

[102]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 6.

[103]. David Hoffman, "Bombs Signal New Strategy by Hamas," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, April 24, 1994. p. 19.

[104]. *The Economist*, April 4, 1992. p. 48. Also see Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 27.

[105]. In Chapter 2, these four principal groups were civil servants, intellectuals, the young - especially students - and recent migrants to the city.

Palestine. Abu-Amr asserts that civil servants and teachers constitute a significant proportion of the overall support accorded the Islamist groups in the Occupied Territories.[106] Intellectuals, such as university professors,[107] and other professionals, the young and college-educated,[108] and those originally from smaller towns or villages hit heavily by occupation,[109] have all tended to support the Islamists in Palestine.

Of course, there are certain fundamental problems involved in trying to attain a completely accurate depiction of the 'true' membership base of movements such as Hamas. Since it was formally outlawed in September 1989, many of its activists were subsequently forced underground and remain secretive about the organization's constituency. It is for this reason that the Israeli deportation of 418 Islamic activists in December 1992 is so informative, because it gives a clear snapshot of a cross-section of the movement at a specific moment of time. It is evident when examining the composition of the deportees that it confirms the aforementioned comments made regarding the Islamists' general bases of support. According to certain observers, in general 100 were men of religion - shaikhs, imams, ulama, qadis, prayer leaders or muezzins - while a total of 170 either had university degrees or similar diplomas.[110] More specifically, there were 30 faculty members (or lecturers with an academic degree who taught in Islamic universities), 20 physicians, and five engineers, in addition to various teachers and businessmen.[111]

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[106]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 18.

[107]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 21, and Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 77.

[108]. Satloff, "Islam in the Palestinian Uprising," p. 392, and Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 124.

[109]. Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 26.

One further crackdown by Israeli forces helps to illustrate this largely 'professional' nature of the main body of Hamas' membership. In mid-April 1994, after the first in a series of suicide-bombings, the Israeli authorities clamped down hard on alleged Hamas sympathizers, arresting 40 Palestinians, the majority of whom were physicians and university professors.[112] It can of course be argued that these arrests and deportations represent the very elite of Hamas' membership base and are thus skewed toward a more 'professional' representation. Yet, at the same time, the overwhelming number of professionals actively involved in such an organization substantiate the view that Hamas, like its sister Islamic movements throughout the Middle East, attract many of the brightest and the best of Palestinian society; and clearly among those people are individuals who feel the most marginalized by, and alienated from, the current ruling structure.[113]

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[110]. Jim Muir, "The plight of the 400," *Middle East International*, 8 January, 1993. p. 6.

[111]. Various sources include: Rekhess, "The West Bank and the Gaza Strip," p. 306, Meir Litvak, "The Islamic Resistance Movement: Hamas," in *Middle East Contemporary*, ed. Ami Ayalon (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1993), p. 196, Muir, "The plight of the 400," p. 6, and Editors, "Clinton, Israel, and the Hamas Expulsion," *Middle East Report* 175, vol.22, no.2 (March-April 1992): 2,37, p. 2.

[112]. Khalid Sulieman-Amayrah, "Awaiting the observers," *Middle East International*, 29 April, 1994. p. 6.

However, there is one group, briefly touched upon above, that will probably be most crucial in determining the potential success of the Islamists in Palestine. This segment of society is the young. As was examined both in Chapter 2, and with reference to the early followers of Muhammad's movement, the younger segments of society have tended to exhibit a greater willingness to follow and support the 'fundamentalist' cause, and Hamas is no exception. In a universal sense, younger political activists tend to be, on average, more radical than their elders. They are also more willing to use violence and aggression to achieve their aims. Furthermore, it is not surprising that they tend to be among that aforementioned group of individuals that feels most frustrated and marginalized by the current economic, political, and social order.

Both Hamas and its predecessor the Muslim Brotherhood have long recognized the importance of acquiring the support of the younger generations, and as a result, have actively sought their support through radical and even revolutionary ideas and tactics. In a general sense, Richard Bulliet describes how the

> recruitment of Islamic activists at high schools and universities succeeds so well because the movement addresses issues like poverty and unemployment, the growing gulf between rich and poor, inadequate government services,

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[113]. While feelings of marginalization and alienation were seen as determining factors in the decision of certain individuals to lend their support to the Islamist groups in general (see Chapter 2), Ahmad argues that the conditions of Israeli occupation have added an extra dimension to such experiences, especially among the more educated members of Palestinian society frustrated by their current circumstances. See Ahmad, *Hamas*, pp. 27-29.

> political corruption, perceived government subservience to American demands, and the hedonistic or European lifestyles of the well-to-do.[114]

In terms of the Palestinian context, while prior to 1967 the Muslim Brotherhood did not actively seek the widespread support of students,[115] in the 1970s the Islamists began to specifically target the youth of the villages, refugee camps, and in the schools.[116] After the *intifada* erupted, recruiting the younger segments of society to the Islamic cause became easier, especially since the PLO had abandoned armed struggle in favour of a negotiated settlement with the enemy. Consequently, it is not surprising that the young, as children of the occupation - those born after 1967 - are among the most receptive to the radical activism of Hamas.[117]

While it is obviously difficult to acquire exact figures concerning Hamas' support among the young, it is once more the deportation of 418 Palestinians in December 1992 that best demonstrates the extent of this support. According to Meir Litvak, 88 students were among the 418 deportees constituting over 20% of the total number.[118] While the deportees do only represent a select group at a specific period of time, it is nevertheless an obvious indication of Hamas' ability to attract younger Palestinians to its radicalized movement.

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[114]. Bulliet, "The Future of the Islamic Movement," pp. 38-39.

[115]. See Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 6.

[116]. Ibid., p. 18.

[117]. *The Economist*, June 13, 1992. p. 44.

[118]. Litvak, "The Islamic Resistance Movement," p. 196.

Furthermore, it is clear that the younger generations of Palestinian society remain a primary target of the Islamists. According to an unidentified member of Hamas in February 1994: "The youth, the younger generation are our primary target because after upholding the word of God, they are our most sacred responsibility."[119] As was practically demonstrated in terms of Hamas' extensive network of nursery schools and kindergartens, by influencing the young towards the ways of Islam, the opportunity arises to instill a faith in the movement that could literally last a lifetime.

The above study indicates that the Islamist movement in Palestine follows a common pattern with regards to its public support and the social base of its membership with other similar Islamic movements throughout the Middle East. Thus, while the poorest and most disadvantaged members of society are represented, professionals, the educated, and the young tend to be overrepresented. For all the reasons previously discussed, these groups tend to most easily identify their feelings of 'frustration' and 'alienation' towards the current system with those views espoused by the Islamists.

HAMAS AND GRAMSCI: THE ATTEMPTS AT CONSTRUCTING THE COUNTER-HEGEMONIC BLOC

After having given a cursory examination of the history of the Islamist movement in Palestine - now confined to the West Bank and Gaza Strip - it is appropriate to apply the Gramscian methodological framework developed in Chapter 3 in an attempt to better explain this phenomenon. Therefore, the argument will be proposed that by applying both Gramsci's conceptualization of society and state, and his construction of the proper counter-hegemonic bloc through the utilization of a unifying ideology, coherent organization, and active, long-term strategy, a universal theory of revolution can created. Consequently, it can be applied as legitimately and accurately to Gramsci's European context as it can to the later twentieth century Middle East. In spite of their obviously different histories, cultures, and political structures, in both situations, a set of individuals who desire revolutionary change share universal characteristics. Most fundamentally, each movement - as manifested through its individual members - is frustrated by the contemporary distribution of power, and therefore seeks to construct a viable force capable of overthrowing the current hegemon. In the process, they aim to acquire power, for the sake of a more 'equitable' and 'just' redistribution of political and economic resources.

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[119]. Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 124.

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SOCIETY AND STATE

It must be stated that the Islamists in Palestine do not allot a considerable amount of time in their discussions to conceptualizing the role of the individual within society.

Thus, as Marty and Appleby argue: "As lay scholars of Islam, leaders of ... fundamentalist movements are not theologians but social thinkers and political activists."[120] In other words, they are much more interested in practically constructing a counter-hegemonic bloc, or more simply a revolutionary force, in their aim to achieve political power.

However, this is not to suggest that they are devoid of theoretical or conceptual insight. Instead, it must be remembered that any evaluation of the current condition of society or the state itself is usually borrowed from the key 'fundamentalist' writers, such as Qutb, Mawdudi, Khomeini, and to a lesser extent, al-Banna. Consequently, the views of the Palestinian Islamists concur with those of the core Islamist ideologues already examined in depth in Chapter 1.

This acceptance by Palestinian Islamists of the views of the principal Islamist theorists is true regarding human nature. As previously examined - in terms of both Mawdudi (in Chapter 1) and Gramsci (in Chapter 3) - their perception of human nature is that it is neither absolute nor unchanging, but instead it is, for the most part, moulded and determined by the ruling hegemon. Yet, as both the Islamists and Gramsci argue, the more relevant and practical function in conceptualizing human nature, the individual, and his/her role in society is in convincing that individual that one's human nature is being manipulated by the forces or powers controlling the levers of civil society. In other words, any philosophical enterprise must have as its ultimate aim a practical application of that theory, and not be undertaken simply for the sake of theory itself.

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[120]. See Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, *Fundamentalism Observed (The Fundamentalist Project)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

For Gramsci, the fact that there is no absolute form of human nature is the essential foundation upon which he constructs his entire counter-hegemonic theory. The Islamists share a similar view of human nature, and argue that it is the fault of current regimes and ideologies - such as those based on nationalism - which evoke the worst elements of human nature because they bound individuals based on "temporary, capricious sentiments and expedient interests."[121] Instead, Islam is the one true way of life because only it "is in harmony with human nature."[122]

Therefore, if human nature is corrupted and prevented from attaining its true potential in this current environment, the need arises to change individual consciousness and release the individual from his/her misguided hegemonic conception of world - what Gramsci labels as 'common sense.' Clearly, the contemporary Islamists understand, as Muhammad did before them, the primary function performed by the individual within the Islamic religion (see Chapter 4), and the need to alter the individual's consciousness before embarking upon a grander long-term strategy. For, as Lisa Taraki argues:

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[121]. David Commins, "Taqi Al-Din Al-Nabhani and the Islamic Liberation Party," *The Muslim World* 81, nos.3-4 (July-October 1991): 194-211, p. 197. While Commins is principally writing about the views of Taqi Al-Din Al-Nabhani, who broke from the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood in 1952 to form the Islamic Liberation Party, his writings are still relevant to the general theories of the mainstream Brotherhood. With the exception of Al-Nabhani's belief in the need to return to an Islamic caliph - as opposed to the Brotherhood's more general view of an Islamic order - as Commins states: "Much of Nabhani's thought is identical to that of the Muslim Brothers, the group from which he split to form the Islamic Liberation Party." p. 211.

[122]. Ibid., p. 198. For a further explanation see Chapter 1.

> Their [the Islamists'] publications and teachings emphasized the importance of remoulding the Muslim individual and the necessity of combating the corrupting influences of the secular and godless society in which Muslims were forced to live.[123]

As will be examined more thoroughly below when observing the Islamists' ideology, they understood the necessity of fashioning a fundamentally new consciousness, separate and distinct from those promoted and supported by the secularist PLO.

When examining what is referred to as 'common sense,' it is clear that these are the myths and traditions passed down by the ruling hegemon and disseminated throughout society as the unquestioned truth.[124] In the case of the PLO, in spite of its relatively short history, it has been able to emphasize its past glories, and as such, equate them with the history of the Palestinian people themselves. Key battles such as Karameh in 1968, Jordan in 1970, and Lebanon in 1982, do not just define the PLO, but the very struggles of the Palestinian people. These past struggles, in turn, become an exclusive instrument of power for the PLO. According to Meir Litvak:

> Every national movement - the Palestinian national movement [PLO] included - views and shapes the past according to its current goals and aspirations, often using the past as a

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[123]. Taraki, "The Islamic Resistance Movement in the Palestinian Uprising," p. 31.

[124]. For a complete explanation see 'Gramsci' Chapter 3.

tool in contemporary political controversies.[125]

In the end, no one seemed to deny Arafat's self-proclaimed leadership status because, in this sense, he was able to portray himself as the 'natural,' unquestioned, or perhaps most appropriately, the 'common sense' leader of the Palestinian people.

The final element Gramsci examines in his conceptualization of society is the group. Gramsci uses such phrases as "organic totality" and "a shared conception of the world" to describe what constitutes the essential nature of such a group.[126] Gramsci's most important contribution in this area though was his ability to transcend the analysis of groups of people simply on the basis of class and what they did, and instead, conceptualize a group by what they thought. In other words, at its most basic level, it is a shared conception of the world that integrates individuals into the larger group.

It is clear the Islamists, especially in Palestine, share Gramsci's views on the importance of a shared world conception in the defining of a group. In general terms of the Islamic faith, Commins makes a similar transition from individual to group when he states that "the individual is an organic part of society whose cohesion arises from its members' common faith."[127] In this sense, faith is synonymous with a common conception of the world. It is obvious from the previous section that Hamas' social base constitutes a cross-section of society, involving individuals from very different class backgrounds and occupations. However, as Gramsci recognizes, it is their common belief in a singular truth, and the fact that their reality is different from that of the current ruling hegemon, that helps to constitute them as a group and unifies these individuals in their struggle to make that conception the new reality, the new 'common sense.' For the Islamists, that belief, that shared conception, is the understanding that only Islam is capable of providing all the solutions necessary for contemporary society.

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[125]. Litvak, "Palestinian Nationalism and Islam," p. 509.

[126]. See Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 328, 352, and 353.

[127]. Commins, "Taqi Al-Din Al-Nabhani and the Islamic Liberation Party," p. 198.

While the Islamists understand the need to conceptualize the role and place of the individual and group within society, they also realize the necessity in clearly comprehending the composition of the 'State' which they are attempting to overthrow. It is true that the Islamists in occupied Palestine differ significantly from most other counter-hegemonic forces, and from Gramsci's original conception of the term. The unique circumstance is admittedly rooted in the fact that the Islamic movement in Palestine is engaged in fighting not simply an indigenous government or regime, but also a foreign occupying power. This colonial status obviously constitutes a distinct situation for the Palestinian Islamists.

However, while this is true, for all intents and purposes, the PLO should be considered the 'State' which the Islamists are attempting to overthrow.[128] Although it does not possess all the mechanisms or autonomy of a state in the proper sense, the PLO does control certain levers of power, more so since the signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993.[129] While it only recently acquired the state-like apparatus of a police force and a more fully-defined administrative structure, the PLO has long been the principal distributor of services and patronage, and more importantly, has long been recognized by the Palestinian people themselves as the true governing power in the Occupied Territories. As late as 1986, 95% of the Palestinian people recognized the PLO as the only 'legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.' This domestic view of the PLO concurs with the international status it first received as early as 1974 when the PLO was given observer status at the United Nations and was recognized by the Arab governments of the Middle East as the Palestinian people's 'sole representative.' Therefore, because of its administrative power, internal acceptance, and international recognition, as Iyad Barghouti states, it could be said that the PLO "became the major power holding authority similar to that of the state."[130]

Since most outside observers have recognized the PLO as the hegemonic force within the Palestinian movement, it should not be surprising that the PLO leadership itself has strenuously maintained that it is the unquestioned hegemon and the dominant power within Palestinian society.[131] One such example occurred in 1990 when Hamas proposed joining the PLO umbrella group under the demand of receiving 40-50% of the seats, and in effect, undermining PLO - especially Fatah - dominance. The reply of the PLO was swift.

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[128]. Once more, it should be stressed that this willingness to supplant the position of the PLO in the Occupied Territories does not preclude the view that the ultimate enemy will remain Israel until the occupation of Palestine ends.

[129]. Legrain, 'Hamas,' p. 169.

[130]. Barghouti, "Islamist Movements in Palestine," p. 166.

> Accusing Hamas of proposing itself as an alternative to the PLO, Filastin Al-Thawara insisted that the PLO is the Palestinian entity for all Palestinians. He stated that 'there cannot be disagreements with the PLO, but only within the PLO' since '*The PLO is the State but is not a party within the State.*'[132]

This perception of itself as the undisputed hegemonic force within the territories, in essence, equating its very existence with that of the Palestinian people, is a view the nationalist movement maintains as vehemently as ever. After suicide bombings in January 1995 that were seen as an attempt by the Islamists to destroy the PLO's negotiated peace process with Israel, "Arafat loyalists issued a stern warning that Hamas should not challenge the authority's [Palestinian Authority's] hegemony."[133] Furthermore, in wake of the January 1996 Palestinian general elections claims were made that whatever flaws the results "validated the PLO hegemony."[134] Therefore, it is true that the Palestinian example is distinct because it differs from other cases, such as Gramsci's experience in Italy, since the Palestinians remain essentially a colonized people. Yet, the ability of the PLO to assert its dominance, and hence hegemonic power, over more than three decades, and to equate its very existence with that of the Palestinian 'state,' bestows on the PLO a definite hegemonic status. As a result, in the Islamists' conceptualization of the State it is the PLO that becomes the primary target in their revolutionary strategy and the force they must seek to overthrow in hopes of destroying the current political, economic, and social order within Palestinian society.

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[131] According to Jamil Hamameh, a leading member of Hamas: "Fatah, because of its hegemony and because of its belief that it was the mother of the Palestinian people, adopted a critical stand as it did not accept any other claims of parentage." Hamameh as quoted in Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 61.

[132] Meir Litvak, "The West Bank and the Gaza Strip: The Intifada," in *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, ed. Ami Ayalon (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1990), p. 254. (Emphasis added - TJB).

[133] David Hudson, "PLO takes stock of peace process," *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, February 26, 1995. p. 3.

In conceptualizing the role of the PLO as the designated hegemon among the Palestinian people, it is necessary to examine how the PLO - like any other hegemonic power - has been able to maintain its power and dominance over civil society. According to Gramsci, this is accomplished through two basic means. The first is by what he describes as 'passive revolution,' while the other is achieved through a combined strategy of 'coercion and consent.'

In examining the concept of 'passive revolution,' the crux of Gramsci's writings on this issue concern how the dominant power co-opts or 'decapitates' those groups that it perceives to be challenging its supremacy or hegemonic position. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, this consists of pre-empting rivals' attempts at domination by maintaining their subservience to the governing party or the ruling regime. In other words, it is necessary to keep all contenders for power in a perpetual state of weakness. For Gramsci, it was apparent that this had been a specific strategy employed by the ruling class in Italy to prevent the workers from openly challenging the elites hold on power. The PLO - especially the Fatah party under Arafat - has been very efficient at neutralising all potential challenges to its dominance. By allotting seats to rival groups and permitting them inside the organization to taste the spoils and patronage of rule, the PLO has effectively co-opted all past contenders for power to its rule. The first main challenge to PLO dominance occurred in the late 1960s when a dissident group, led by George Habash, broke from the PLO to form the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). However, this break was short-lived, and the PFLP was soon enticed to return to the PLO. While certain splinter groups, especially those more radical groups supported by Syria, have remained outside the PLO fold, since most of the challenges to PLO dominance have come from avowedly nationalist groups who share an ideological compatibility with the PLO, the PLO has been able to consistently "co-opt or otherwise neutralise" such threats.[135]

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[134]. Derek Brown, "Terror returns but Peres has to persevere," *The Guardian Weekly*, March 3, 1996. p. 10.

It is not surprising that a similar strategy of co-optation was the natural first reaction of the PLO towards the growing threat posed by Hamas with the outbreak of the *intifada*. As Joseph Teitelbaum asserts:

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[135]. Muir Rabbani, "The PLO and the intifada - a complex relationship," *Middle East International*, 31 March, 1989. p. 20.

> For the PLO, which represented itself - and had been recognized by many - as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the solution to the challenge from inside the territories, as represented by Hamas, was to co-opt it into the PLO.[136]

For the PLO, the aim of such a strategy was to keep Hamas weak and dependent on the PLO's hegemonic goodwill through the distribution of the patronage of its position.

However, as opposed to previous nationalist challenges, the ideology and strategies of Hamas were not so compatible as to allow for easy co-optation. The avowedly anti-nationalist stance of Hamas,[137] and its promulgation of certain pro-Islamic solutions - such as the establishment of an Islamic state over every inch of Palestine[138] - made this challenge to the power and legitimacy of the PLO altogether unprecedented. For the first time in the history of the PLO it was confronting a challenge that struck at the very core of its existence.

With this unprecedented challenge to its previously undisputed hegemonic status, the PLO embarked on the other strategy Gramsci argues that hegemonic powers utilize to retain their dominant position within the state and society -

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[136]. Joshua Teitelbaum, "The Palestine Liberation Organization," in *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, ed. Ami Ayalon (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1990), p. 228.

[137]. See Rabbani, "The PLO and the intifada - a complex relationship," p. 20.

[138]. See *Hamas Charter*, Article 13.

'coercion and consent.'[139] It is clear that the PLO has assumed this type of approach with the Islamists - especially Hamas - over the past decade. Every time there has been an outbreak of conflict between the two sides, attempts have been made by the PLO to assert its 'moral' leadership and self-proclaimed domination over the Palestinian people to propose a reconciliation between the warring parties. An example of one such conciliatory gesture was after a particularly bloody battle in May 1991, in which supporters on both sides opened fire on one another. According to a Fatah activist:

> They [Hamas] command support from 10 per cent of the people and we could easily put them in their proper place. But Arafat wanted national unity and asked us to accommodate them and now look how they are acting.[140]

It is not surprising that since the Palestinian Authority was first established in Gaza and Jericho in May 1994, and then later throughout the major towns and cities of the West Bank, the PLO has been much more willing to exploit its ability to oscillate between coercion and consent in demanding the acquiescence of groups challenging its rule.[141] According to Kodmani-Darwish:

> The attitude of the Palestinian National Authority toward the Islamists has evolved considerably since Yasir Arafat's "return" to Gaza in July 1994 and the confrontations between the authority and Islamists in November 1994. This evolution ... moved from a position of firmness toward a more

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[139] For an examination of Gramsci's views on this subject see Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, especially pp. 12, 45, 169, and 170.

[140] Daoud Kuttab, "Occupied Palestine: Worries about the intifada," *Middle East International*, 14 June, 1991. p. 13.

[141] According to Legrain, especially during the first six months after Arafat returned to Gaza: "Every important conflict that occurred between the nationalists and the Islamists was followed by negotiations and agreement." Legrain, "Hamas," p. 173.

> conciliatory stance.[142]

Thus, with the perceived increased moral legitimacy allotted him by the new Palestinian Authority, Arafat's first attempt at quelling the threat of the Islamists was that of an elder statesman.

However, when these attempts failed to stifle the Islamic challenge to his newly entrenched regime Arafat did not hesitate to use force in his efforts to crush Hamas. With a recently established security force,[143] a newly created kangaroo-style court that could sentence suspected Islamic activists without recourse to a defence attorney or access to an appeals procedure,[144] and the explicit backing of the Israeli military, Arafat had the necessary power to force the Islamists to bend to his rule. In 1995-96, Arafat came down especially hard on the Islamists in wake of their campaign of suicide-bombings.

It is evident that Arafat continues to conduct a dual strategy of 'coercion and consent.' Even members of the Palestinian Authority continue to oscillate between the desire for more harsh measures against Hamas, and a willingness to co-opt the Islamists into the PA. According to Menachem Klein:

> On the one hand, Major-General Nasr Yusuf, the Director-General of Palestinian National Security Forces, asked

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[142]. Bassma Kodmani-Darwish, "Arafat and the Islamists: Conflict or Cooperation?" *Current History* 95, no.597 (January 1996): 28-32, p. 30.

[143]. In the Gaza Strip, Arafat "recruited some 20,000 men for six branches of police - one policemen for every 50 inhabitants." Georg Brunold, "Hopelessness and Hamas in Gaza," *Swiss Review of World Affairs,* no.6 (August 1995): 24-26, p. 25.

[144]. See *The Economist,* June 17, 1995. p. 42.

> Arafat to let him use massive force against Hamas. On the other hand, PA civilian staff members recommended minimizing the use of force or, alternatively, co-opting Hamas into the PA and strengthening Hamas' moderate stream...[145]

Consequently, throughout this period, in an attempt to reassert the PA's dominance, Arafat has consistently demonstrated his willingness to use both 'coercion and consent' to retain control and forestall any attempt by Hamas to challenge the rule of the unquestioned hegemon. According to Derek Brown, Arafat has continuously "played cat-and-mouse with the Islamists, alternatively confronting and then offering cooperation to them."[146]

Of course, one of the primary factors in Gramsci's conceptualization of the State and society is to demonstrate that each sphere is fundamentally different, a separate and autonomous zone. In Gramscian terminology, civil society is referred to as 'the private,' while the State corresponds to that of 'political society,' and consequently, it is these two levels that constitute the function of hegemony.[147] In the opinion of Gramsci, it is essential to demonstrate their uniqueness in order to devise the most appropriate strategy by which to defeat the currently entrenched hegemon.

In the case of Palestine, on the one hand, it was previously shown that, despite its colonial status, the PLO

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[145]. Menachem Klein, "Competing Brothers: The Web of Hamas-PLO Relations," in *Religious Radicalism in the Greater Middle East*, eds. Bruce Maddy-Weitzman and Efraim Irbar (London; Portland Or.: F Cass, 1997), p. 125.

[146]. Derek Brown, "Bombs could push Israelis to the right," *The Guardian Weekly*, March 3, 1996. p. 10.

[147]. See Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 12.

"became the major power holding authority similar to that of a state."[148] However, on the other hand, it is also clear that differences do exist between the views of the institutionalized PLO and civil society. In turn, this helps to demonstrate that these two realms - the public and the private - are indeed separate. According to Hillel Frisch, this distinction between civil society and the State (i.e., PLO) is evident in the fact that despite PLO statements to the contrary

> political secularism typified the political institutionalization of the Palestinian nationalist movement much more than it did Arab society at large ... the fact remained that Fatah adhered to its doctrine that the PLO was essentially a secular movement with a vision of a secular state.[149]

Yet, for many Palestinians, even prior to the birth of Hamas, Islam assumed a central role in their daily lives. In other words, the religious tendencies of Palestinian civil society remain much more prominent than PLO policy and pronouncements would suggest. According to Frisch, 44.4% of Palestinians prayed 5 times a day, while 73.3% fasted during Ramadan.[150] Therefore, while the PLO had to become more secularized, or at the very least to de-Islamize its message to placate Christian elites and groups such as the PFLP, which has a large Christian constituency, many Palestinians within civil society do not necessarily support such an overtly secularized orientation.

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[148]. Barghouti, "Islamist Movements in Palestine," p. 166.

[149]. Frisch, "The Evolution of Palestinian Islamic Doctrine," p. 49.

[150]. Ibid., p. 48.

It is clear the Islamists recognize this conceptual difference that exists between the 'State' (and the PLO) and civil society. It is also evident that the awareness of such a distinction is a fundamental component of the Islamists' strategy. According to Graham Usher:

> In fact, socio-cultural hegemony over Palestinian society has been a strategic constant of mainstream Islam in the occupied territories for the last 15 years, articulating an ideological position which predicates the liberation of Palestine - indeed of the Arab and Muslim world generally - on the founding of the Islamic personality.[151]

This view is also reflected in the often repeated belief that "what Hamas wants is what mainstream political Islam in the occupied territories have always wanted - less the soil of Palestine than the souls of the people."[152] In its practical context, this fundamental distinction between State and society can be observed through Hamas' demands for more influence in schools and mosques and for more concessions on social policy and education, including instituting the *Sharia*.[153] Thus, in both its theoretical and practical dimensions, the Islamists' conceptualization of the fundamental separation between the State and civil society is a clear indication that the Islamists' recognize the essential need to examine the way in which both reinforce the dominance of the current hegemonic power. For it is only through this recognition of their distinct and separate nature that civil society can first be conquered before any frontal attack on the State contemplated.

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[151]. Graham Usher, "Women, Islam, and the law in Palestinian society," p. 16.

[152]. Graham Usher, "Hamas seeks a place at the table," *Middle East International*, 13 May, 1994. p. 19.

[153]. *The Economist*, August 27, 1994. p. 12.

IDEOLOGY

When examining the role of ideology in the construction of a counter-hegemonic force, it is clear that it is more important how an ideology is used rather than how it is presented. In other words, while all revolutionary ideologies express essentially the same discourse in terms of their basic belief in equality, freedom, and social justice, for the counter-hegemon, the primary function of an ideology is its utilization as an instrument to unify, educate, and prepare the followers for the eventual conflict with the ruling hegemonic force. In order to properly study the role of ideology, its revolutionary nature, the interlinking of theory and practice, and the role of organic intellectuals will all be examined. In the end, it is clear that a 'truly' revolutionary ideology must seek to change the consciousness of the individual by coopting and coalescing its members behind a certain world view, one that is both fundamentally different and unique to the current 'common sense' beliefs of the dominant hegemon.

The first point that is evident when examining the ideology of the Islamist movements in Palestine - especially Hamas - is that it is most succinctly a 'revolutionary' ideology. When examining the theories of Gramsci in Chapter 3, it was stated that the primary role of Gramsci's writings, in their most practical sense, were their use as a guide to revolutionary action. In Chapter 4, it was also argued that Muhammad's overriding aims were those of a revolutionary. In other words, neither Gramsci nor Muhammad pursued incremental change and moderate reforms within the current system, but instead, both sought the direct overthrow of the current socio-economic order.

The case of Hamas is no exception. The uncompromising position assumed by Hamas towards both Israel, and PLO moderates willing to negotiate with the Israelis, is clearly meant to establish Hamas as a revolutionary force created with the clear intention of supplanting both as the dominant power in Palestine - not just the West Bank and Gaza Strip - but the whole area west of the Jordan River. In fact, Hamas' whole existence is based on Palestinian discontent with the status quo.[154] In addition, it was already examined how "the abandonment by PLO factions of ideological and revolutionary discourse"[155] was a key factor in Hamas' increased support. According to Yezid Sayigh:

> It [Hamas] is attracting an increasing number of adherents, who support its call for armed resistance to the military occupation and rejection of compromise, thanks to deepening despair and polarisation provoked among the Palestinians by Israeli policies in the territories.[156]

Therefore, on the one hand, the situation in Palestine is unique because as an occupied people Hamas has assumed an almost 'necessary' revolutionary function within the Palestinian political landscape as a force of national liberation against Israeli rule. Yet, on the other hand, it is also clear that Hamas' ideology is revolutionary in terms of its declarations regarding the need to change the current political, economic, and social structure within Palestinian society itself, and in the process, replace the current indigenous hegemon in the Occupied Territories, the PLO.[157]

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[154] Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 106.

[155] Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 86.

[156] Yezid Sayigh, "Feeding violence in the occupied territories," *Middle East International*, 22 January, 1993. p. 17.

An additional component of any successful 'revolutionary' ideology is the absolute necessity of linking theory and practice to create a legitimate and coherent counter-hegemonic force. Gramsci is unequivocal in his stance that theory and practice are both essential in the construction of such a force. In Gramsci's opinion, only a concrete theory can render "practice more homogeneous, more coherent, more efficient in all its elements."[158] In other words, only a clear and coherent ideology can practically transform the forces necessary to bring about the desired revolutionary change.

In Chapter 1, it was stressed how the link between theory and practice was a fundamental component of the ideologies of all the principal Islamist ideologues of the twentieth century. In each case, Mawdudi, Qutb, Khomeini, and al-Banna, were not simply political theorists but 'men of action,' leaders of political movements desiring the practical gains they theoretically conceptualized. The Islamists in Palestine share this view of the fundamental link between theory and practice. Beginning with the Muslim Brotherhood and their cousins in the Islamic Liberation Party (see above) both theory and practice were deemed complementary parts of any revolutionary action. According to David Commins:

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[157]. Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 117.

[158]. See Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 365.

> [T]his rational doctrine [of Taqi Al-Din Al-Nabhani] is the basis for an ideology, a systematic order that prescribes solutions for individual and social problems, methods for applying such solutions, the means for preserving the basic doctrine, and the vehicle for further spreading the ideology. At the ideological level, there has to be established an inextricable link between thought and action.[159]

More succinctly, Commins states:

> In prescribing a course of action, Nabhani emphasises the absolute necessity of beginning with the proper ideology and inextricably linking it to a sound methodology in an Islamic party. This party must then evolve according to the principles designed to preserve the link between idea and practice.[160]

In both cases, theoretical solutions put forth can only be achieved through action, but action without a clear theoretical foundation intuitively lacks the direction necessary for proper revolutionary execution.

However, while Nabhani expressed the need to combine theory and practice, or thought and action, a constant criticism of the Muslim Brotherhood was that its strategies and actions had remained almost exclusively within the realm of theory. The Brotherhood had long claimed the need to confront the Israeli occupation and the growing secularisation of Palestinian society. Yet, in the end, it had confined its actions simply to 'spreading the gospel' in its attempts to Islamize Palestinian society.

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[159]. Commins, "Taqi Al-Din Al-Nabhani and the Islamic Liberation Party," p. 204.

[160]. Ibid., p. 203.

It was the *intifada* which would represented a fundamental change in the Brotherhood's approach to the link between theory and practice.[161] Consequently, the creation of Hamas "completed the link by connecting the theoretical and the practical."[162] The Brotherhood was no longer satisfied with simply speculating about the plans for their future pious state and now sought to actively confront the Israeli occupation.[163] It was also clear that this new linking of theory and practice finally allowed the Islamists to challenge the PLO, not just for political legitimacy, but for the representation of the Palestinian people themselves. Therefore, while the earlier Islamist groups, such as the Brotherhood and the Liberation Party, had understood the need to create this link between theory and practice, it was not until the *intifada* that this link was cemented. As a result, it was the *intifada* that marked the beginning of the Islamists' transformation into a truly active revolutionary force.

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[161] Jarbawi, "The Position of Palestinian Islamists on the Palestine-Israel Accord," p. 135.

[162] Ibid., p. 142.

[163] Ibid., p. 130. According to Satloff, the *intifada* was the turning point that led many Palestinian Muslims to assume a more activist stance. "For the first time in decades, devout Palestinian Muslims are speaking the language of action, not just piety." Satloff, "Islam in the Palestinian Uprising," p. 399.

From the aforementioned statements, it is clear that since one of the primary reasons for creating a 'homogeneous, coherent, and efficient ideology' is the need to link theory and practice, it is necessary that the counter-hegemonic force has 'indigenous thinkers' to function as the principal creators of such a linkage. This role is of course assumed - in Gramsci's terms - by the 'organic intellectuals.' As Gramsci stresses, the formal occupation of these individuals is insignificant, for their responsibilities are essentially functional. In this sense, their general role must be that of a director, organiser, educator,[164] while more specifically, it is one of bringing a critical understanding of oneself, and creating a new and higher conception of one's own reality.[165] In other words, the principal role of the organic intellectual is to unify the movement by creating a new objective reality, separate and distinct from that of the ruling hegemon.

It is obvious that in the Islamic movements of the Middle East, and especially in Palestine, there is an understanding of the need to produce 'organic intellectuals' within one's own ranks to disseminate an alternate reality, while countering the 'common sense' beliefs advanced by the current hegemon. In examining the composition of the Islamists' social base in Palestine, it was observed how intellectuals - especially university lecturers and other highly educated

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[164]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 16.

[165]. Ibid., p. 333.

individuals - have continuously comprised a large proportion of its membership base. Even before the 1967 war it was stated that 13 percent of the Brotherhood's support was drawn from the intelligentsia,[166] though it does not appear that the Brotherhood had made significant inroads into student bodies and elite circles, including intellectuals and university professors, until the 1980s.[167] Furthermore, it was earlier demonstrated how university lecturers, university students, and other professionals, comprised a large proportion of those Palestinian activists deported in December 1992.[168] The fact that Islamist groups, such as Hamas, have performed exceptionally well in the student union elections held at a number of universities in the Occupied Territories reflects the degree to which they have been able to infiltrate such 'intellectually-inclined' groups within society. Of course, Gramsci did stress that a person's particular occupation is not the determining factor when classifying a specific individual as an 'organic intellectual.' Yet, it is clear from the above statements that the Islamists have achieved considerable success within what could be designated as the more highly educated segments of Palestinian society. For the Islamists, this support among what could be termed the Palestinian intelligentsia clearly represents the type of

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[166]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 6.

[167]. Ibid., p. 21.

[168]. According to earlier statements the numbers were 30, 88, and 49 respectively. See Litvak, "The Islamic Resistance Movement," p. 196.

'organic intellectuals' Gramsci believes are so essential in disseminating the new ideas and views of the counter-hegemonic force.

However, as previously stated, it is the functional role of the organic intellectuals that remains the most crucial to the actual construction of the counter-hegemonic bloc. This is true in much the same way as it is the overall use of ideology, not necessarily the specific discourse of the ideology itself, that performs the greatest function. Therefore, the first role of the organic intellectuals is purely educational. In other words, their role is to inform and to disseminate a specific ideology or conception of the world in an attempt to organize, unify, and expand the movement into its own separate and unique conception of the world. In terms of disseminating the new Islamic ideology Commins comments:

> Consequently, the problem is not simply how to revive Islamic society, but how to revive Islamic culture among the elite and how to bridge the gap between the educated and the rest of society.[169]

Therefore, it becomes evident that conceiving the organic intellectual as both an educator and organizer reflects the very essence of the counter-hegemonic ideology itself, and in the process, the messengers become, in many ways, much more important than the message.

In addition to these general functions, the organic intellectuals and the ideology of the counter-hegemon have a much more concrete and specific role. The ideology being espoused by a certain counter-hegemonic force must contain a coherent enough conception of the world - though admittedly lacking specifics - to force a fundamental change in the individual consciousness of each and every potential member of the greater group. If such an ideology lacks the power to force an individual to question the common sense 'reality' of his or her current worldview, such an ideology will ultimately fail.

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[169]. Commins, "Taqi Al-Din Al-Nabhani and the Islamic Liberation Party," p. 201.

All ideologies in their conceptualization of reality - whether it is those espoused by Gramsci or the Islamists of the Middle East - can be best described as very utopian in nature. When one examines the specifics of any counter-hegemonic ideology it is clear they are all promoting the view of a world devoid of injustice and inequality, while perceiving freedom and brotherhood as the norm. The fact that the specifics of such a utopian forecast are unclear does not make the conception of such a world any less enticing. Since, as was already argued, most counter-hegemonic forces are more united in what they oppose - the current hegemon - than what they support (see Chapter 2), the essential role of an ideology is to convince those who are sceptical of the current order that there is a more just and equitable alternative. In other words, the aim must be to change the consciousness of the people who accept the view that the potential sought in change is more appealing than the current reality.

As Gramsci explains in his examination of consciousness, the term relates to a 'consciousness of being part of a particular hegemonic force,'[170] and a 'new way of conceiving the world and man.'[171] In other words, consciousness is created by attaching oneself to a specific group with a particular conception of, or orientation towards, the world. In this sense, it is clear that the Islamists understand the need to present a fundamentally alternative conception of the world to the Palestinian people who have been raised and inundated with the secular nationalism of the PLO. In Article 2 of the Hamas Charter, the Islamists argue that such a distinct and total conception of the world does in fact exist. According to the Charter:

> The Islamic Resistance Movement ... professes a comprehensive understanding and precise conceptualization of the Islamic precepts in all aspects of life: concept and belief, politics and economics, education and social service, jurisdiction and law, exhortation and training, communication and arts, the seen and the unseen, and the rest of life's ways.[172]

The need to adhere to a fundamentally alternative conception of the world, and the function such a conception performed in the Islamists' overall strategy vis-a-vis the PLO, was well understood by the Brotherhood prior to the *intifada*. In fact, until the outbreak of the *intifada* the general orientation of the Muslim Brotherhood had been to focus on raising religious consciousness within Palestinian society, in much the same way as the Communist Parties of

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[170]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 333.

[171]. Ibid., p. 417.

[172]. See *Hamas Charter*, Article 2.

Europe had sought to raise the class consciousness of the proletariat. In both cases, the primary aim was to counter the persuasive power of the current hegemon and its ability to prevent individuals and certain groups from recognizing their true self-interests. According to Budeiri:

> Its [Muslim Brothers] members preoccupied themselves with calls to reform Palestinian society from within, to combat the secularism of the PLO, and to curtail the strength of the left, the purveyor of atheism, immorality, and imported ideas. They perceived their main task to be education, social work, and the raising of religious consciousness.[173]

Lisa Taraki concurs with this analysis when she examines the strategy of the Muslim Brethren in the late 1970s.

> This [educational] effort was centred around mosques, schools, and universities, and aimed at inculcating the youth with a religious education, as well as forming the basis for a political alternative to the Palestinian nationalist movement and what the Brethren viewed as the "bankrupt" ideologies of its component groups.[174]

As Taraki clearly demonstrates, the attempt to raise religious consciousness among the Palestinian masses also had a definite political component, and consequently, these two elements - the religious and the political - were for the Islamists inseparable. Even Hamas recognizes this when it states: "Hastening that day [of liberation] requires the dissemination of Islamic consciousness among the masses on the local, Arab, and Muslim levels."[175] The Islamists understood that it was only by raising religious consciousness - and thus combating the false consciousness disseminated by a godless, secular, and westernized PLO - that the Islamists could assume the initial step in implanting the Islamic message into the hearts and souls of the Palestinian people. This first step, it was hoped, would eventually culminate in the end of the dominance of the PLO's secular ideology and its replacement with a truly religious consciousness, and more importantly, institute the Islamists as the true hegemonic power in Palestine.

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[173]. Budeiri, "The Nationalist Dimension of Islamic Movements in Palestinian Politics," p. 92.

[174]. Taraki, "The Islamic Resistance Movement in the Palestinian Uprising," p. 30.

[175]. Ibid., p. 31.

In terms of the Islamists' self-proclaimed attempts to change the consciousness of the Palestinian people, one needs to address the actual degree of success they have attained in this regard. It was examined earlier how one of the key stumbling blocs confronting the Islamists was the large Christian constituency within Palestinian society,[176] along with its inherent secular orientation. Yet, certain studies do show that the Islamists have garnered some success in their attempts to raise the religious consciousness of the Palestinian people, and have redirected many Palestinians' views away from the more secular beliefs of the PLO. Previously, it was examined how Graham Usher had observed that: "A recent survey on social attitudes in the territories ... revealed consistently more religious consciousness among young Palestinian women aged 15 to 19 than among women aged 20 to 29."[177] In addition, there are other indications that would seem to suggest an increase in religious consciousness among

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[176]. See Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 128, and Talhami, "Islamic Fundamentalism and the Palestinians," p. 187.

[177]. Graham Usher, "Women, Islam, and the law in Palestinian society," p. 17.

Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. In reference to the growth in girls' uniforms and head covering, Lisa Taraki believes: "Such manifestations attested to the Islamists' success in fashioning a religiousness and identity different from the religious consciousness of most Palestinian Muslims."[178] Therefore, in terms of both its deliberate strategy and with reference to its apparent results, the Islamists have been successful in changing the consciousness of individual Palestinians and reorienting their beliefs, their very conceptions of reality, away from the PLO and towards the newly emerging Islamic counter-hegemonic bloc.

However, it is important to remember that in their attempt to change the consciousness of individual Palestinians, the Islamists are not simply addressing present conceptions of reality. Instead, it can be argued that the current battle - for the hearts and souls of the Palestinian people - is over nothing less than the right to interpret the entire history of 'Palestine' and the very 'nature' of its people. In this context, the PLO claim that only they have been on the front lines for thirty years fighting Israeli occupation, thus bestowing upon them the legitimacy of a true liberation force. The Islamists, for their part, point to the Brotherhood constituencies who fought in 1948, arguing that they have remained a national liberation force uninterrupted by the passage of time. In other words, the battle for the hearts and souls of the people is not just about changing the consciousness of the people, it involves a clash over the very conception of the Palestinian identity.

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[178]. Taraki, "The Islamic Resistance Movement in the Palestinian Uprising," p. 31. Ernst Hunziker concurs with this view when he states: "Complete veiling is not traditional among Palestinian women. It is a new phenomenon, evidence of the influence of fundamentalists..." Ernst Hunziker, "Gaza's Rival Universities," *Swiss Review of World Affairs*, no.6 (June 1996): 14-19, p. 17.

For the Islamists, this conception of history, and hence reality, involves the founding of a fundamentally new and different type of state, morality, and culture. As Gramsci argues, the founding of such a state and culture must become the supreme aim of the counter-hegemonic group, for nothing less can achieve the fundamental goal of overthrowing (i.e., destroying) the current regime. In recognition of the Islamists' aims in Palestine, Litvak states:

> Islamic popular culture ... constitutes opposition and resistance to the official - state inspired - Arab culture. At stake then, is the domination of Palestinian culture as part of the broader political struggle which is waged between Hamas and the PLO organizations.[179]

Therefore, the fact remains that the counter-hegemon does not just pose a threat to the current hegemon at a specific point in time, but that the counter-hegemon transcends time and space and thus establishes an eternal opposition to the ruling bloc that makes the final victory of this revolutionary force its only purpose.[180]

Most succinctly, this section has tried to demonstrate that ideology conceived within a Gramscian framework is utilized first and foremost as an instrument to unify, educate, and prepare a counter-hegemonic force. This revolutionary tool is espoused by a group of organic intellectuals that attempt to link the theory of a certain ideology with the practical means necessary for achieving such a desired result. This is not to suggest that the specific ideological pronouncements of a given counter-hegemonic force are irrelevant, but they do appear subservient to the ideology's more functional means. All liberationist theories - communism, nationalism, political Islam - employ similar utopian concepts, like freedom, justice, equality, and brotherhood, but in reality, remain non-specific on their perceived ends - except of course the overthrow of the current ruling power. Even the Islamists in Palestine, who assert their universality and their ultimate goal of reconquering all of Palestine through violence and the destruction of Israel, have become both a victim of their national context,[181] and have hinted that they may, in fact, accept a 'cease-fire' that involves the reestablishment of Palestinian sovereignty over 'only' the West Bank and Gaza Strip; in other words, a two-state solution.

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[179]. Litvak, "Palestinian Nationalism and Islam," p. 513.

[180]. In fact, it must be remembered that in Chapter 3 Gramsci stressed that the sole aim of the counter-hegemon must be to overthrow the current regime because the counter-hegemon "was rationally and historically created for that end." Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 147.

What all these aforementioned statements demonstrate is that for any revolutionary ideology to be successful, it is essential that there be a degree of flexibility and pragmatism that allows for the ideology, and hence its following, to expand. This was true even in the case of Muhammad. As examined in Chapter 4, while he was adamant that paganism be destroyed, in 628 he was also willing to sign the Treaty of Al-Hudaybiya over the protests of his followers because of his belief that such an act of diplomacy was the most prudent (i.e., 'pragmatic') strategy to undertake. In the end, it was observed that perhaps no other single action taken on Muhammad's part was so instrumental in the final capture of Mecca and his defeat of the Quraysh.

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[181]. As will be argued later in terms of the Islamists' strategy, especially Hamas, its universal pronouncements appear to be in direct contradiction to its true aims, which involve the acquisition of power within a specifically defined national territory. This, of course, was also a fundamental dilemma faced by Gramsci. (See Chapter 3).

The Islamists in Palestine, though there is little doubt about their devotion to God and their belief in the fundamental principles of political Islam (see Chapter 1), have consistently demonstrated a readiness to assume a more pragmatic stance when it was deemed necessary.[182] In fact, this pragmatic approach of Hamas in all areas of its struggle - from its ideology to its strategy - is cited by a number of authors as its defining characteristic. According to Ahmad:

> Pragmatism appears in their painstaking efforts to provide rationality for their view of the world, religious ideology is effectively used to construct a political program and social and economic conditions are employed to generate public support.[183]

As Milton-Edwards succinctly states: "In this field the leadership of Hamas has turned the politics of pragmatism into a fine art and positive attribute."[184]

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[182]. As Gramsci understands, the success of a revolutionary movement is based on its ability to be pragmatic and its "adaptation in accordance with the requirements of the goal to be achieved." Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 195. Also see p. 188.

[183]. Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 117.

It is not surprising that Hamas' ideological adaptability has increased in recent years. This increased flexibility is clearly in response to both its antiquated policies and its increased growth, which makes it necessary to reconcile ever-widening divisions within the movement - especially among the younger, more radical supporters and older, more moderate members - without losing the potential for increased support. In the end, it is because of its ideological flexibility and pragmatism that Hamas remains both the most significant and only real legitimate threat to the PLO. As Jarbawi argues:

> Thus, while expectations are limited for the influence to be exerted by the ... other Islamic movements on the future of political life in Palestine, the scope of possibilities for Hamas, in addition to its pragmatism and multiple options, make it a major and fundamental element for the future.[185]

Therefore, once more it must be stated that while the specifics of a certain ideology are not irrelevant, ideology must be seen more as a tool to draw support to a counter-hegemonic force, and not as an exclusionary doctrine with the power to discourage potential supporters. In other words, an ideology must be as broad as possible if it is to act as a 'lightning rod' for all the dissatisfied elements within society who, above all else, are united in their view that the ruling hegemon must be overthrown.

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[184]. Milton-Edwards, "Political Islam in Palestine in an environment of peace?" p. 216. The other authors who emphasize this pragmatic nature of Hamas include: Ahmad, *Hamas*, pp. 55, 73, and 88, Jarbawi, "The Position of Palestinian Islamists on the Palestine-Israel Accord," pp. 136, 145, and 153, Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 133, Barghouti, "The Islamist Movements in the Occupied Territories," p. 11, and Legrain, "Hamas," p. 173.

[185]. Jarbawi, "The Position of the Palestinian Islamists on the Palestine-Israel Accord," p. 153.

ORGANIZATION

Probably the one aspect of the Palestinian Islamists that the least is known about, especially Hamas, is their organizational structure. As both a clandestine and outlawed movement - the Israelis formally outlawed Hamas in September 1989 - Hamas has been forced underground in many of its organizational facets. However, enough selective information is still available to allow for an examination of their organizational structure, and the way in which the conceptualization of the framework of the movement concurs with those ideas promulgated by Gramsci. Most succinctly, both the Palestinian Islamists and Gramsci understand the two most important components of a revolutionary organization. The first involves the actual hierarchical structure of the organization itself. A proper counter-hegemonic organization must contain three levels: the leadership, the intermediate (vanguard), and the mass. While in one sense all three levels are separate, it is through the modern political party that the levels coalesce and unify the greater aims of the revolutionary movement. Second, every counter-hegemonic bloc must be more than its structure. In other words, the organization must also perform a functional role in the greater struggle. Certain characteristics must be exhibited by the individual membership - both the leaders and the followers

- to enhance the overall cohesion and preparedness of the group. Members must be active, not passive, in striving for their aims, while the individual qualities of faith, conviction, obedience, and discipline must be ever present. In the end, as Gramsci emphasizes, it is the degree of organic unity achieved by the organization - in terms of a general structure exhibiting specific functions and certain characteristics - which will eventually determine if a counter-hegemonic force will be successful in its attempt to overthrow the current hegemonic power.

In terms of organizational structure, it is evident that the Islamists in Palestine recognize the crucial and determining role performed by 'the Modern Political Party' in creating the conditions necessary to challenge the dominant position of the PLO. The Muslim Brotherhood, throughout the post-World War II era, has worked diligently to create a modern political party, with branches extended throughout all the major Middle Eastern states. In fact, this international dimension of the Brotherhood is very similar to the international communist party of Gramsci's period. After the outbreak of the *intifada*, the Brotherhood's global orientation became especially helpful to the Palestinian Islamists. Large scale imprisonment and deportations of top Islamic leaders forced the Brotherhood and Hamas to look to their Muslim Brethren in Egypt and Jordan for guidance in key decision-making matters.[106]

However, even in the early years of the Islamic movement in Palestine, Taqi Al-Din Al-Nabhani conceived the role of the political party in much the same fashion as Gramsci. Gramsci sees the Party, not just as an organizer of people - fusing the collective will - but much more importantly, as a disseminator of ideas. Consequently, the party had to work in ways that allowed it to "develop integrally into a state ... and into a conception of the world."[107] In a much similar vein, Commins demonstrates how Nabhani believed that:

> The party ... interacts with society to achieve a gradual unification of ideas and beliefs in society, thereby purifying it of corruption. Once the party has drawn the masses to its program it is ready to lead the nation in revolutionary action to revive Islam by erecting an Islamic state.[108]

Therefore, for both Gramsci and Nabhani, the Party is not conceived simply as a passive entity of formal organization, but instead, as an activist force that strives to disseminate its message and to 'purify' society of the 'common sense' ideas of the ruling hegemon.

In the case of Hamas, Ali Al Jarbawi is the most succinct in this view that the party and the movement must continually strive in its daily interactions with society. According to Jarbawi:

> As a political movement with political motives and objectives, Hamas possesses an elaborate organizational structure that interacts with society in a number of areas

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[106]. Abu-Amr, "Hamas," p. 14.

[107]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 267.

[108]. Commins, "Taqi Al-Din Al-Nabhani and the Islamic Liberation Party," pp. 205-206.

> and constantly works to preserve itself through the maintenance of this structure.[189]

This ability of Hamas to interact so extensively within Palestinian society has helped Hamas to remain an active force within Palestine. As previously mentioned, it is because of its strong institutional framework of mosques, schools, and charitable groups that Hamas continues to possess "a strong and widespread organizational base within the occupied territories."[190]

In terms of its formal organization, like Gramsci, the Islamists understand the need for a formal or even 'rigid' structure to solidify the core membership of the movement and to unify all individuals in the greater aims of the organization. At the top of such a hierarchical organizational structure is the movement's leadership. In this sense, it could be argued that the Islamists share more in common with Gramsci than with the Prophet Muhammad who they usually depict as their 'revolutionary' model. For like Gramsci, contemporary Islamists do not conceive of the leadership of the party as a single individual, but instead, as a select group of individuals of the highest character.

However, in spite of this statement, it must be admitted that in the case of Hamas, Shaykh Ahmad Yasin, more than any other single individual, tends to personify the 'spiritual' leadership of the movement. In addition, having devoted his life "to replanting Islamic values in the Gaza Strip"[191] through the founding of the Islamic Centre in 1973, Yasin is generally regarded as being the principal founder of Hamas.[192] In his position as the spiritual head of the movement, Yasin has always exhibited the fundamental qualities and revered character of leadership that Gramsci perceived as essential for the leader of such a movement.[193] On the one hand, like Muhammad, Yasin has exhibited the necessary 'moral' characteristics of leadership, while on the other hand, he has shown himself to be pragmatic, knowing "the lines of least resistance" if one wishes "to secure the obedience of the led or the ruled."[194] As head of the 'moderate' wing of Hamas, Yasin has demonstrated his willingness on various occasions to be flexible and to adapt his strategy to the realities on the ground. As early as September 1988, when asked if Hamas might negotiate with Israel, Yasin did not quote the recently published Hamas Charter (August 1988) which explicitly forbids any talks with Israel, but instead put forth certain pre-conditions for future negotiations.[195] In addition, in late 1995, Yasin led the moderate wing in endorsing Hamas' participation in Palestinian elections set for January 1996, though hard-line members of Hamas eventually forced the movement to boycott those elections.[196]

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[189]. Jarbawi, "The Position of the Palestinian Islamists on the Palestine-Israel Accord," p. 143.

[190]. Ibid., p. 143.

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[191]. *The Economist, December 19, 1992*. p. 40.

[192]. Ibid., p. 40. Many of these points regarding Hamas's birth - in December 1987 - were examined above. In addition, it should be noted that the founding of Hamas is something that Yasin freely admits in spite of his long-term incarceration in Israeli jails.

[193]. For some examples see Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 88 and 144.

[194]. Ibid., p. 144.

[195]. Klein, "Competing Brothers," p. 116.

Notwithstanding Yasin's position as the 'spiritual' head of Hamas and his crucial role in founding the movement, it is still true that Yasin does not constitute 'the Prince-like' individual represented by Muhammad or rejected by Gramsci as obsolete for our time.[197] Since it is obviously very difficult to accurately assess the current leadership of the movement because of the deportations and imprisonment of many of its leaders and the overriding need for secrecy within the organization, Abu-Amr's early account of the composition of Hamas' leadership is especially helpful. According to Abu-Amr, while Yasin can be considered the principal architect of Hamas, the initial leadership of Hamas consisted of Shaykh Ahmad Yasin and six other founding members.[198] According to Abu-Amr:

> In addition to Yasin, six other figures were present [at Hamas's founding meeting]. Those were Abd-al-'Aziz al-Rantisi (a physician), Ibrahim al-Yazuri (a pharmacist), Sheikh Salah Shidaha (a staff member of the Islamic University of Gaza), Issa al-Nashshar (an engineer), Muhammad Sham'a (a teacher), and 'Abd-al-Fattah Dukhan (a schoolmaster).[199]

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[196]. Khalid Amayreh, "Hamas says no," *Middle East International,* 15 December, 1995. p. 8.

[197]. One example of this is the fact that Hamas continued to grow in popular support between 1989-1993 in spite of Yasin's incarceration and his removal from the daily workings of Hamas. Conversely, Hamas has not enjoyed any substantial revival in support since his October 1997 release.

[198]. Abu-Amr, "Hamas," p. 13.

[199]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza,* p. 63. It should be noted that al-Rantisi is still a very active member of Hamas' leadership structure and played a key role in Yasin's release from prison in October 1997.

In addition to this 'core' leadership was Sheikh Jamil Hamami, who became Yasin's primary link with the Islamist movement in the West Bank,[200] Therefore, while Yasin may still be perceived as the supreme 'spiritual' leader of Hamas, as Abu-Amr summarizes: "Hamas is virtually led by a consultative council (*majlis shura*) whose membership reside inside and outside the Occupied Territories."[201]

The second element of Gramsci's organizational structure is the intermediate level, or what can be referred to as the 'vanguard' of the party. It was examined in Chapter 3 that Gramsci himself does not actually use the term 'vanguard' in his later writings, and by the time of *The Prison Notebooks* seems to have forsaken the term vanguard for intermediate. In his definition of the intermediate element,[202] Gramsci seems to be equating the vanguard less in the context of its original development by Lenin, and more in terms of the 'organic intellectuals' he focuses upon so extensively. This is not to deny the political role the 'vanguard' performs, but as was suggested above in examining the highly educated composition of the deportees - as representative of the Palestinian Islamists' 'vanguard' - the intellectual role of this intermediate level and its ability to disseminate the message of the counter-hegemon to the individual membership remains its most prominent function in the revolutionary struggle.

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[200]. Ibid., p. 64.

[201]. Ibid., p. 65. Even today, a substantial portion of the leadership of Hamas resides outside the Occupied Territories, especially in neighbouring Jordan.

[202]. Gramsci defines it as a group "which articulates the first element [leadership] with the second [mass] and maintains contact with them, not only physically, but also morally and intellectually..." Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 153.

The third component of the organizational structure of the counter-hegemon is the 'mass' element, or its individual membership. In Chapter 3 it was shown how Gramsci fundamentally adheres to the belief that each individual member of a counter-hegemonic bloc is just as important in determining the eventual success or failure of the revolutionary struggle as the other two components. Therefore, it is imperative that each individual performs an active and participatory role within the organization. In fact, it was demonstrated how vehemently Gramsci argued against some of the entrenched views of his communist colleagues who believed in a much more mechanical view of the masses as objects to be manipulated, instead of active subjects who must participate to create the conditions necessary for revolution.

It is clear that the Islamists share this view of the individual as an 'active' member of the movement. In other words, the individual is not perceived as a passive receptor of the ideology, but must perform a concrete role in spreading the message of Islam and working for the enlightenment of his own society. In Chapter 4, it was demonstrated how Muhammad, from the very beginning, had conceptualized the religion of Islam as an active force in itself. The individual had to consistently reaffirm his faith in Islam by observing the various pillars of his religion. Specific rituals, such as the daily prayers and fasting during Ramadan, demanded both individual participation and internal discipline.

This inherently activist strand within Islam extends to the political realm, as the individual is required to perform an equally crucial role in both living and spreading the Islamists' political doctrine. The active participation of the individual member is not only true in its extreme form, such as suicide-bombing missions and membership in Hamas' military wing, the Al-Qassam Brigades. It is also evident in the ability to arouse support for strikes and boycotts in its confrontations against factions of the PLO and in its capacity to hold massive rallies in a show of both strength and defiance. Even in December 1996 with thousands of its leaders in prison - both Israeli and PNA jails - Hamas staged a massive rally as 40,000 gathered in Khan Yunis, in the Gaza Strip, to mark the first anniversary of the assassination of Yahya Ayyash ("the engineer") and the ninth anniversary of the group's creation in 1987.[203] All these examples clearly demonstrate that the Islamists in the Occupied Territories understand the importance of an activist and participatory mass element within their overall organizational structure.

At this point, it may be helpful to more carefully examine the specific structure of Hamas in an effort to better understand the unique characteristics of its organizational framework. From its very inception, the six founding members of Hamas, along with Yasin, established leadership wings or committees in the political, security, military, and information spheres.[204] Other writers, while agreeing with this general breakdown of the movement into various branches, differ regarding the exact number of spheres, their specific purpose, and their degree of autonomy from the centre. In fact, these discrepancies once more demonstrate the extreme difficulty involved in acquiring a completely accurate breakdown of Hamas' internal composition.

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[203]. Khalid Amayreh, "Hamas gains ground," *Middle East International*, 20 December, 1996. p. 4.

On the one hand, in 1989, Meir Litvak claimed:

> Hamas was organized into three wings. Its spiritual leader, Shaikh Yasin ... also headed the political wing. The military wing ... was engaged in operations against the IDF [Israeli Defence Force]. The security wing ... was responsible for intelligence gathering and the elimination of collaborators and other elements which corrupted Palestinian society, such as prostitutes and drug dealers.[205]

Later in 1993, Litvak asserts:

> Inside the territories, Hamas was reportedly divided into three branches: propaganda, which dealt with the legal Muslim Brotherhood activity; the central branch, responsible for underground activity; and the Izz Al-Din Al-Qassam battalions, engaging in military action. Each branch was divided into four regional commands: one in Gaza and three - northern, central, and southern - in the West Bank. All of these bodies were independent of each other and subordinated directly to the U.S.- based leadership.[206]

Ahmad Rashad, on the other hand, claims that "Hamas is composed of administrative, charitable, political, and military elements, which have subdivisions,"[207] and more specifically, consists of an intelligence wing, commando units, information office, and political office.[208] In addition, while Rashad admits that each region contains branches or 'families,' he maintains that each branch is in fact answerable to an administrative centre,[209] not on a structure of external leadership, as Litvak claims. In spite of these differing views, it is clear that Hamas possesses a diverse and well-structured organization within the Occupied Territories. It is an organization that is involved in many different areas - political, social, and military - and through the spreading of its message and the provision of essential services, Hamas remains both effective and legitimate in the eyes of many Palestinians.

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[204]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 63.

[205]. Litvak, "The West Bank and Gaza," p. 237.

[206]. Litvak, "The Islamic Resistance Movement," p. 194.

[207]. Rashad, *The Truth About Hamas*, p. 2.

After having examined some of the general structural components of the Islamists' organizational framework, specifically in terms of Hamas, it is necessary to examine the second element Gramsci deems as essential for any counter-hegemonic organization - the characteristics of its followers. In this respect, it was observed how Gramsci uses such terms as discipline and obedience to signify the type of qualities that are required of each and every member of a revolutionary organization, along with the need for faith, loyalty, and conviction in the ultimate greater aims of the movement. Many of these terms have already been analyzed within their Islamic context. Obviously, all these characteristics were demanded by

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[208]. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

[209]. Ibid., p. 2.

Muhammad and can be traced back to the Koran. In addition, it was demonstrated in Chapter 1 how Islamic theorists such as Mawdudi and al-Banna, who had practical experience in establishing and maintaining Islamic parties, demanded a complete faith and unquestioned obedience in the movement at all times.

In terms of requiring an absolute faith and conviction in the overall aims of the movement, in a general sense, it can be argued that by basing a counter-hegemonic force on an ideology derived primarily from religious conviction, there already exists within the individual's personal belief system a strong tendency towards a type of unquestioning faith. This would therefore seem to make the transformation of faith from the religious sphere to political realm much more natural. Jamil Hamameh of Hamas places the overriding importance of faith and conviction into context when he states: "What is important is that the beliefs and the convictions of the people serve the movement."[210]

In a more specific sense, while Islamic military missions - like suicide bombings - do not necessarily represent the extent of 'faith' that each and every individual within the movement could be assumed to possess, it does demonstrate a degree of conviction not shared by their opponents within the PLO. As Litvak argues: "These [military] operations suggested that, unlike the PLO, Hamas ... could rely on popular support and on its adherents ideological commitment."[211] Consequently, it can be argued that if a certain individual is willing to die for a cause, not only because of his faith and conviction, but also because of the promises nationalists cannot make - such as eternal bliss in paradise through martyrdom for the cause of God - the Islamists can generate a degree of faith and conviction even Gramsci could never have imagined.

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[210]. Jamil Hamameh as quoted in Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 40.

Gramsci mentions one final aspect of the revolutionary organization which perhaps best summarizes the linking of both the organizations' structural components and the individual characteristics of its members. This involves the degree to which such an organization can be said to form a type of 'organic entity' or 'organic whole.' According to Gramsci, the proper organization "requires an organic unity between theory and practice, between intellectual strata and popular masses, between rulers and ruled."[212] This organic unity must therefore be reciprocal, interlinking all three structural components of the organization, while at the same time augmenting those individual characteristics necessary for revolutionary success.

On the one hand, such an 'organic' unity is illustrated by the orientation of the individual towards the greater group. In other words, certain individuals, through a shared or common worldview, evolve together in forming what Gramsci would term 'the collective will.' As previously mentioned, Taqi Al-Din Al-Nabhani assumed such a position. According to Commins: "The individual is an organic part of society whose cohesion arises from its members' common faith."[213]

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[211]. Litvak, "The Islamic Resistance Movement," p. 195.

[212]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 190.

On the other hand, this organic unity can flow from the top down as the movement itself 'imposes' a type of unity upon its membership through both its organizational composition and the qualities and beliefs it preaches. To Graham Usher, it is the unified nature of Hamas, based primarily on its coherent structure of leadership, that has been most responsible for enhancing Hamas' image, and thus increasing its support among the Palestinian people. According to Usher:

> Hamas's growth in the uprising can be attributed to the fact that it has one, and only one, leadership - inside [the Occupied Territories] - and therefore does not suffer from the results of having a variety of leadership groups, or of the existence of various centres which issue their directives from a distance without being strongly and directly connected to what is going on here.[214]

It is clear that much of Hamas' success - especially in the early years of the *intifada* - was based in part, on the large measure of internal cohesiveness or 'organic unity' displayed by the Islamic group. In fact, as will be argued later, perhaps no other single factor has been so important in determining both Hamas' success and its subsequent failures in providing the Palestinian people with a legitimate counter-hegemonic force.

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[213]. Commins, "Taqi Al-Din Al-Nabhani and the Islamic Liberation Party," p. 198.

[214]. Graham Usher, "The PLO opposition: rebels without a constituency," *Middle East International*, 7 October, 1994. p. 17.

LONG-TERM STRATEGY

The final component in Gramsci's building of a counter-hegemonic bloc is the need to construct such a force through an active and deliberate long-term strategy. In the case of the Islamists in Palestine, it is probably in reference to their long-term strategy that they most clearly approximate the counter-hegemonic framework developed by Gramsci. The Islamists have always maintained that such a strategy must be long-term, because it is necessary to first transform civil society by educating individuals in the principles of Islamic doctrine. Consequently, it is only after this period of initial preparation that any substantial and permanent change can occur. Like Gramsci, the Islamists also appreciate that if a truly revolutionary strategy is to be successful the counter-hegemon must continually depict itself as an alternative to the current hegemon, total in its opposition, and separate and independent from its power. It is at this juncture when the counter-hegemon and its fundamentally new and different conception of the world, having taken root in civil society, is finally prepared to challenge the supremacy of the hegemon for control of the state. It is only at this point that the Islamists' strategy can truly be described as one in which a 'war of position' has been transformed into a 'war of movement.' The only question for Hamas and its supporters is whether they attempted their 'war of movement' before the 'war of position' had been decisively won.[215]

It must be initially stated that when contemporary Islamists discuss their long-term program to create an Islamic state, they claim as the basis of their strategy the experiences of Muhammad. This is true in terms of the two stages of his prophetic career, the Meccan phase (610-622) and the Medinan phase (622-632). As previously examined, these two stages correspond very closely to Gramsci's 'war of position' and 'war of movement' (see Chapter 4).

However, in many ways, it would seem that the 'revolutionary' strategy of the Islamists more closely approximates Gramsci's methodological framework than with the actual experiences of the Prophet. First, Muhammad did not transform or win over civil society to the degree that either Gramsci or the Palestinian Islamists believe is necessary before embarking on a frontal attack or war of movement. Second, both Gramsci and the Islamists in Palestine aim to overthrow established powers with all the modern levers of state control at their disposal, not simply a tribe that had the makings of a loosely bound confederation. In the case of the Palestinian Islamists, this involves the combined power of both the PLO and their Israeli occupiers. Finally, and most importantly, like Gramsci and the Italian Communist Party, the Islamists are divided between the need to consider the practical implications of a strategy emphasizing the overriding importance of the unique national context versus a more internationalist approach as demanded by the inherent universalism of their ideology. In other words, while their respective ideologies demand a universal approach their audience is clearly national in scope. This is a problem that Muhammad did not need to examine to any significant degree. Therefore, while it is true that Muhammad's construction of a revolutionary force is the model the Islamists seek to emulate, it is Gramsci's counter-hegemonic framework which corresponds much more closely to the Islamists' ideal.

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[215]. Once more, it should be reiterated that Gramsci believes that "the war of position once won, is decisive definitively." Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 239.

On its most basic level, both Gramsci and the Islamists share almost identical views regarding the appropriate strategy through which to construct a viable counter-hegemonic force. Most succinctly, both believe that such a strategy must be active, deliberate, and long-term, not passive, mechanical, and only interested in short-term gains. While many of the more specific elements of the Islamists' strategy are examined more closely below - in terms of Gramsci's conceptualization of a 'war of position' and 'war of movement' - at this point it is important to examine the general thrust of the Islamists' strategy. In Abu-Amr's opinion, while other differences may have divided the various Islamic groups in Palestine in the past, the one unifying factor has been their common belief in the need for a deliberate, long-term strategy. According to Abu-Amr:

> Despite their different methods; the goals of the Islamic

> groups is to transform society into an Islamic one, modelled after the first society, established by the prophet and his companions.[216]

More specifically, it is probably the Muslim Brotherhood and its protracted and concerted efforts to transform the very character of Palestinian society that best epitomizes Gramsci's long-term 'revolutionary' strategy. Consequently, the traditional strategy of the Muslim Brotherhood has always involved the need to reorganize or to 'Islamize' society before any attempt could be made for the Islamization of the state.[217] Litvak, for his part, is even more succinct in his assessment of the Brotherhood's overall long-term strategy.

> The Muslim Brotherhood had traditionally followed an evolutionist approach, calling for reformist action through education and infusion of Islamic practices into all aspects of life. The movement spread its influence through the network of mosques and various charitable and social organizations, under the roof organization of the Islamic community.[218]

In fact, the willingness of the Brotherhood to embark on a long-term strategy to fundamentally alter Palestinian civil society has remained its raison d'etre. In other words, such a long-term program did not only encompass its strategy, but also the very ideology and organization of the movement itself.

In terms of transforming the very nature of Palestinian civil society, like Gramsci, the Islamists realize the essential role performed by preparing the masses through education and indoctrination. To the extent that Gramsci wrote of the need for "long ideological and political preparation,"[219] the Islamists also recognize that before any violent confrontation can occur, it is necessary to embark on a policy of deliberate preparation. Jamil Hamameh of Hamas understands the importance of such preparation.

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[216]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. xiv.

[217]. For examples see Barghouti, "Islamist Movements in Palestine," p. 65, and Legrain, "Hamas," p. 163.

[218]. Litvak, "The West Bank and the Gaza Strip," p. 237.

> The sons of the Islamic movement were undergoing a process of socialization and preparation and being brought up for the moment when they would have to exercise their legitimate rights over the soil of Palestine in resisting and ridding it of its occupier.[220]

Clearly, the 20 years of Israeli occupation from 1967 to the outbreak of the intifada in 1987, was for the Brotherhood a prolonged period of spiritual awakening in which the aim was the creation of a new generation, imbued with a firm and unwavering Islamic consciousness.[221]

More specifically, as Gramsci recognizes, the primary tool for such preparation is through "the permanent discipline of education."[222] The Brotherhood too understood the principal role that education performed in constructing the consciousness necessary to eventually acquire power. In a general sense, Nabhani believed that the people must first

> share a mature party culture which is reinforced by study, contemplation, and faith. The party [then] gradually coalesces throughout this initial 'educational phase.'[223]

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[219]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 110.

[220]. Hamameh as quoted in Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 34.

[221]. Litvak, "Palestinian Nationalism and Islam," p. 512.

[222]. Gramsci, *The Prince and Other Writings*, p. 21.

[223]. Commins, "Taqi Al-Din Al-Nabhani and the Islamic Liberation Party," p. 206.

It is probably not surprising that while contemporary political Islamists do recognize the importance of such an 'educational' stage, they credit the 'Meccan phase' of Muhammad's prophecy as the model to emulate in raising the religious consciousness of the masses. According to Hamas spokesman Mahmud Zahhar:

> He [the Prophet Muhammad] lived another twenty-two years after the revelation, and devoted eighteen of those years to such education. In doing likewise we arm man against the sickness of society.[224]

However, it should be noted that while the need to first educate the Palestinian masses in the principles of Islam has long been a key component of the strategy of the Brotherhood, Hamas continues to espouse the need for this type of preparation. In fact, the need for prolonged religious education and indoctrination, and its role in the overall hegemonic struggle, formed a key component in the Hamas Charter of August 1988. In Article 15, the Charter states:

> When an enemy occupies some of the Muslim lands, jihad becomes obligatory for every Muslim... That requires that education be passed to the masses locally, in the Arab (world) and in the Islamic (world)...[225]

In addition, the Charter states:

> We must train the Muslim generation in our area, an Islamic training that depends on performing religious obligations, studying the book of Allah very well, the Prophetic narration (*sunna*), the Islamic history and heritage from its authentic sources with the advice of specialists and scholars, and using the curriculum that will provide the Muslim with the correct world view in ideology and thought.[226]

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[224]. Mahmud Zahhar, "Hamas: Waiting for Secular Nationalism to Self-Destruct," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 24, no.3 (Spring 1995): 81-88, p. 84.

[225]. See *Hamas Charter*, Article 15.

[226]. Ibid., Article 16.

Finally, in reference to this strategy, the Charter states: "It [Hamas] works ... through educating the Islamic people ideologically, morally, and culturally in order to play its role in the battle for liberation."[227] Clearly, all these pronouncements - in addition to the Islamists' emphasis on practically promulgating their message through an array of educational institutions from nursery schools to universities - demonstrate the importance the Islamic groups continue to accord the role of education in their overall revolutionary struggle.

At this stage, it is important to examine a crucial problem that both Gramsci and the Palestinian Islamists were forced to confront in terms of their long-term strategy. Most succinctly, it involves the question of whether the building of a specific counter-hegemonic bloc should be confined to a strictly national context or must such a revolutionary model be developed and based on the inherently universal nature of its ideology? In Chapter 3, it was examined how for Gramsci this dispute, in its most fundamental form, came down to a debate between the universal and 'permanent revolution' views of Trotsky versus the nation-based and 'revolution in one country' ideas espoused by Stalin.

In terms of the Palestinian environment, this predicament continues to confront the Islamists with a fundamental dilemma concerning the development of their long-term strategy. For inasmuch as early communism was portrayed as an international ideology immune to national borders, Islam has had to accommodate itself between its universal pronouncements and its need to address the requirements of a specific group of people within the boundaries of a distinct nation-state. Hillel Frisch succinctly summarizes this strategic paradox faced by all Islamic movements when she comments that

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[227]. Ibid., Article 29.

> the core of Islamic doctrine is universal, but the arena of political conflict and the realization of the political goals of most fundamentalist Islamic movements are focused around the territorial state.[228]

However, this national/universal debate has been especially problematic for the Islamist movement in Palestine. The Islamists have had to try and balance the specific aspirations of the Palestinian people with the realization that their colonial status made their dependence on external actors - especially their Arab neighbours - much more prominent. Consequently, the Islamists were forced to consider the importance of acquiring substantial support throughout the Muslim world for their stated goal of liberating all Palestinian lands from foreign occupation. According to Frisch:

> The canonization of Palestine (i.e., the spot of Muhammad's ascension to heaven) might have been an effective ideological tool for the mobilization of Palestinians, but it risked being so at the expense of mobilizing Muslims everywhere. The tension between the need to mobilize the whole of the Islamic world and the canonization of territory

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[228]. Frisch, "The Evolution of Palestinian Islamic Doctrine," p.45. Litvak "The West Bank and the Gaza Strip," p. 238 and Klein "Competing Brothers," pp. 112-113 also examine this national/universal paradox within the Hamas movement.

> and peoplehood was fraught with danger.[229]

With the outbreak of the *intifada* a fundamental transformation occurred in terms of the Islamists' overall strategy from the universalist approach of the Muslim Brotherhood to the more nationalist orientation of Hamas.[230] However, early attempts were made to try and balance these two contradictory aims within the Islamic movement as demonstrated in the August 1988 publication of the Hamas Charter. In terms of its Palestinian dimension, the Charter does assert that Hamas "is an outstanding type of Palestinian movement,"[231] and that "Palestine is the heart of the earth, the meeting of continents, and the lure of the avaricious since the dawn of history."[232] Conversely, regarding its transnational orientation, the Charter also declares the essential universality of the Islamic Resistance Movement,[233] and adds that "the land of Palestine is an Islamic *Waqf* (Trust) upon all Muslim generations till the day of Resurrection,"[234] consequently, "the liberation of Palestine is obligatory for every Muslim, no matter where he is."[235] In the end, the Hamas Charter attempts to strike a delicate balance between these competing areas of orientation by stating that:

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[229] Hillel Frisch, "The Case of Religious Emulation: The Nationalization of Universal Religious Doctrine in the Palestinian Fundamentalist Movement," *Middle East Focus* 12, no.3 (Fall 1990): 18-25, p. 22.

[230] In fact, in examining this dichotomy Frisch states that "the Palestinization of the movement is probably its [the Muslim Brotherhood] most prominent innovation incorporated into the Hamas document." Frisch, "The Evolution of Palestinian Islamic Doctrine," p. 52. Klein, also reaches a similar conclusion on "Hamas leadership giving preference to 'Palestinianizing' Islam over 'Islamicizing' Palestine." Klein, "Competing Brothers," pp. 112-113.

[231] See *Hamas Charter*, Article 6.

[232] Ibid., Article 134.

[233] Ibid., Article 7.

[234] Ibid., Article 11.

> The problem of liberating Palestine is related to three spheres: the Palestinian sphere, the Arab sphere, and the Islamic sphere. Every one of them has a role to play in the struggle against Zionism.[236]

Meir Litvak examines these early attempts by Hamas to reach some type of compromise between the inherent divisions created by both a nationally oriented and universally declared strategy. In the end, according to Litvak:

> Like the Egyptian Muslim Brethren, Hamas reconciles this tension between its enhanced Palestinian orientation and adherence to the pan-Islamic ideal by making a distinction between the short-term goal - the complete liberation of Palestine and the establishment of an Islamic state in Palestine - and the long-term goal of a universal Islamic state and the restoration of the Caliphate.[237]

Therefore, as Gramsci argued in terms of communism in the 1920s, the primary focus of any counter-hegemonic bloc must be the unique national context it confronts, before it can hope to turn its attention to the 'inevitable' expansion of the ideology beyond its current national borders. The rationale and process by which Gramsci came to adopt the Stalinist position - 'revolution in one country' - was also eventually accepted by Hamas. For Hamas realized that it was only through first defeating the current hegemonic force situated within its own specific national context that Islam could ever hope to eventually gain universal ascendancy and world dominance.[238]

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[235]. Ibid., Article 14.

[236]. See *Hamas Charter*, Article 14. For a more complete discussion of the relevance of the Hamas Charter towards this question see Frisch, "The Case of Religious Emulation," p. 24, and Frisch, "The Evolution of Palestinian Islamic Doctrine," p. 52.

[237]. Litvak, "Palestinian Nationalism and Islam," p. 516.

After having briefly addressed this fundamental dilemma confronted by the Palestinian Islamists, it is now necessary to examine some of the more specific elements of Gramsci's long-term strategy. As previously mentioned, in Gramsci's view, for a counter-hegemonic force to be successful it must portray itself as a legitimate alternative to the ruling hegemon. Consequently, it must continuously and deliberately present its aims, ideology, and organization in complete and total dialectical opposition, separate from, and independent of, the corrupting influences of the current hegemon.

The Islamic movement in Palestine has long presented itself as a broad alternative to the mainstream and secular policies of the PLO. Even prior to the outbreak of the *intifada* and the creation of Hamas, the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood offered a theoretical and ideological alternative to the more nationalistic PLO.[239] However, the creation of Hamas definitely constituted a new phase in the development of the Islamic movement in Palestine as the Islamists evolved from simply postulating theoretical options to offering concrete and practical alternatives to the hegemonic PLO. As Frisch argues:

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[238] In all fairness, the author must admit that the willingness of Hamas to emphasize the national context over the universalism of its ideology is also a result of the Palestinian Islamists' unique position in the Muslim World. For the Palestinians remain essentially a colonized people and Hamas has succeeded, to a great extent, because it has been able to portray its movement as a legitimate force of national liberation. For some examples see Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 60, Barghouti, "Islamist Movements in Palestine," p. 163, and Talhami, "Islamic Fundamentalism and the Palestinians," p. 31.

[239] See Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 14 and Satloff, "Islam in the Palestinian Uprising," p. 392.

"The Hamas constitution ... was obviously drafted with the aim of presenting an Islamic alternative to the alternative blueprint of the nationalists."[240] Litvak concurs with this view that the founding of Hamas represented a crucial turning point in the evolution of the Islamist movement in Palestine. According to Litvak:

> Thus, Hamas formulated its ideology in rivalry with the secular national Palestinian forces within the PLO, and in opposition to Zionist - Israeli claims to land. Seeking to appeal to wider constituencies, Hamas had to present itself not just as a religious alternative to the secular PLO leadership, but also as a national one.[241]

In examining the growth and development of a counter-hegemonic alternative, it is clear that such a force must be both subjective and objective in nature. In terms of its subjective character, the Islamists themselves were determined to portray their movement as a serious contender for power against the entrenched position of the PLO. Lisa Taraki argues that Shaikh Ahmad Yasin and Shaikh Bassam Jarrar deliberately created Hamas to provide a genuine rival for power to the nationalist forces in Palestine and their godless, secular, and western ways.[242] This self-recognition as a clear and deliberate alternative to the status quo - both the PLO and Israel - is also asserted by Hamas spokesman Mahmud Zahhar. According to Zahhar: "Israel knows that Hamas is the radical and cultural alternative to its order and to the western order in general."[243] As both these cases demonstrate, Hamas has deliberately attempted to portray itself as a legitimate counter-hegemonic alternative to the dominance of the PLO within Palestinian civil society.

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[240]. Frisch, "The Evolution of Palestinian Islamic Doctrine," p. 52.

[241]. Litvak, "Palestinian Nationalism and Islam," p. 501. Also see Legrain, "Hamas," p. 165.

[242]. Taraki, "The Islamic Resistance Movement in the Palestinian Uprising," p. 30.

In terms of the more objective dimension of Hamas' self-presentation as a legitimate option to the PLO, a counter-hegemonic force is usually defined by the degree to which it provides an alternative to the mainstream regime in all dimensions and areas. In one sense, this alternate image can be assessed by the fundamental distinctions exhibited by the two movements regarding differences of ideology, organization, and strategy.[244] However, Abu-Amr goes even further in contrasting these two groups and the fundamentally alternative views and visions they both promote. For Abu-Amr, while Hamas evolved as a counter weight to the dominance of the PLO, its roots as a fundamental alternative to the PLO are not based simply on differences of policies or on short-term interests. Instead, such an alternative is based on "nothing less than the leadership, the identity, and the future direction of the Palestinian people."[245] In other words, Hamas is not simply presenting a competing political program to gain potential supporters - though this is also true - but is in fact seeking to overthrow the current system and create a fundamentally new society based on a radical and alternative conception of the world.

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[243]. In this sense, the PLO is also seen to represent the interests of the West and Israel against the indigenous hopes of the Muslim peoples in Palestine. See Zahhar, "Hamas," p. 83.

[244]. Peretz, "Secular-Religious Tension Within the Palestinian Resistance Movement," p. 15.

[245]. Abu-Amr, "Hamas," pp. 5-6.

It is clear that the Islamic bloc, led by Hamas, has persisted in its efforts to present itself as a viable option to the entrenched position of the PLO. In fact, Hamas has always denied the PLO's self-appointed position as 'the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.'[246] Consequently, according to Litvak:

> Whereas all other organizations in the territories regarded the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians, the Islamic organizations were equivocal on this point.[247]

In fact, Hamas has openly challenged the legitimacy of the PLO,[248] while claiming itself as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people's holy war."[249] Perhaps the single best example of Hamas' promotion of itself as a truly counter-hegemonic force occurred in September 1992 during the Madrid peace process when Hamas led a group of ten factions in opposing PLO concessions (see above). As Martin Litvak observes regarding this oppositional alliance, Hamas was "advocating that the ten factions form an alternative provisional leadership under its domination that would constitute the authentic representation of the Palestinian people."[250] Throughout this period, Hamas continued to offer itself as an alternative to the PLO mainstream in all its forms. It stressed its Islamic ideology as opposed to the secularism of the PLO, provided an efficient patronage network as a substitute for the PLO's bankrupt one, and escalated its armed struggle as opposed to the PLO's route of negotiation and moderation.[251]

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[246]. Milton-Edwards, "Political Islam in Palestine in an environment of peace?" p. 208.

[247]. Litvak, "The West Bank and the Gaza Strip," 1989, p. 237.

[248]. Litvak, "The West Bank and the Gaza Strip," 1990, p. 252.

[249]. Litvak, "The Palestine Liberation Organization," p. 269.

While the signing of the Oslo Accords in September 1993 forced Hamas to embark on a decidedly more pragmatic approach, it continues to follow a strategy that emphasizes its fundamental nature as an alternative to the PLO. Hamas still refuses to recognize the sole representative status of the PLO, and has now promoted itself as the main opponent and alternative of the Oslo Peace Process.[252] According to Kodmani-Darwish, the Oslo Accords have done nothing to alter Hamas' portrayal of itself as a legitimate and true alternative to the PLO.

> [T]he Oslo agreements do not seem to carry the promise of a near and real peace as much as they open the way for the Islamists to compete for power. It follows that the stake has become a struggle for power between two competing claims of legitimacy: that of the PLO, acquired through 25 years of armed struggle, and an Islamic movement that claims that same legitimacy in the name of its present resistance in the territories, the only means it sees (as opposed to peaceful settlement) to force Israel to evacuate the territories.[253]

Therefore, even contemporary Islamists, in spite of recent setbacks, continue to depict themselves as the only viable option to the corrupt and failed ways of the PLO. As was examined in an earlier section, the Islamists do not hide the fact that they wish one day to supplant the PLO as the dominant force in the territories. As Bassam Jarrar of Hamas suggested, Hamas will be waiting in the wings for the PLO's inevitable disintegration along with the so-called peace process it created.[254]

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[250]. Litvak, "The Islamic Resistance Movement," p. 194.

[251]. Ibid., p. 194.

[252]. See Milton-Edwards, "Political Islam in Palestine in an environment of peace?" p. 210, and *The Economist*, April 22, 1995. p. 46.

[253]. Kodmani-Darwish, "Arafat and the Islamists," p. 28.

Inherent to this idea of depicting oneself as an alternative to the ruling hegemon - which essentially defines the very notion of the counter-hegemonic force itself - is the idea that Gramsci develops, through his utilization of Marxist terminology, of the need to create such an alternative in its complete totality. In other words, as Gramsci asserts, it is necessary to develop the counter-hegemonic bloc in 'dialectical opposition' to the ruling hegemon. Consequently, this entails more than just presenting an alternative political program or ideology, but instead, as Gramsci argues, it involves "the necessity for each member of a dialectical opposition to seek to be itself totally and throw into the struggle all the political and moral 'resources' it possesses..."[255] For it is only in this manner that a counter-hegemonic force can "achieve a genuine dialectical 'transcendence' of its opponent,"[256] and a perfect

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[254]. **See above for Jarrar's comments.**

[255]. **Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 109.**

[256]. **Ibid., p. 109.**

"counterweight to - another conception of the world."[257]

When examining this issue of dialectical opposition in the context of the Palestinian Islamists and the mainstream PLO, it is clear that the two groups promote fundamentally opposing programs and competing visions of the Palestinians' future. In Gramscian terminology, it is clear that the Islamists have fashioned another 'conception of the world' as a counterweight to the PLO's own particular view. As previously examined, in terms of strategies and aims, both sides exhibit very contrasting positions.

> The Muslim Brotherhood opposes the PLO's once held strategic goal of establishing a secular democratic state in Palestine. The society also opposes the goal of establishing an independent Palestinian state on part of Palestine. Moreover, the Muslim Brotherhood opposes the PLO's attempts to reach a political or diplomatic solution to the Palestinian question.[258]

Consequently, it is through the promulgation of these types of 'counter' policies that the Islamic bloc continues "to formulate its ideology in opposition"[259] to the mainstream PLO, regardless of what the PLO has claimed in achievements for the Palestinian people. Even before the PLO began to pursue a policy of negotiation and moderation, the Muslim Brotherhood was critical of its secular and non-Muslim lifestyles. Consequently, the PLO's eventual decision to negotiate a two-state solution with Israel only accentuated the contrasting nature of the two blocs.

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[257]. Ibid., p. 157.

[258]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, pp. 29-30.

[259]. Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 105.

Of course, as Gramsci understands, this need for the counter-hegemon to be constructed in fundamental opposition to the current hegemon is based on more than a difference of ideologies or political platforms. In other words, this opposition transcends the notion of simple party competition for power as in the West - parties continually replacing one another through electoral politics - and instead involves the very essence of the counter-hegemonic force, its very reason for being. Therefore, in the case of the Palestinians, the PLO's policies of compromise and moderation must be countered by the Hamas doctrine of total rejectionism, and in the end, the degree of polarization displayed between the PLO mainstream and Islamic opposition must become unbridgeable.[260] For the Islamists understand that any successful counter-hegemonic force must manifest itself through forcing the people to choose between two clear-cut polar opposites. On the one hand, a hegemonic PLO, and on the other hand, an Islamic opposition existing inasmuch as it provides a counter-weight to this dominant force. In the end, there must exist two competing conceptions of the world, defined in many ways less by what each advocate, than by fact that they are in complete opposition to the views of the other.

Another essential component in the formation of a counter-hegemonic bloc is the need for this force to be completely separate from, and independent of, the current hegemon. This aspect was not only emphasized by Gramsci, but Qutb too argued for the need of a true Islamic movement to be completely free of, and to avoid any interaction with, the current *'jahiliyyah'* regime (see Chapter 1). In fact, the Islamists, especially Hamas, have gone to great lengths to argue that only they - as opposed to other radical factions within the Palestinian movement such as the PFLP and the DFLP - have remained a truly independent Palestinian force. According to Hamas, in contrast to other Palestinian groups it was not born of the PLO, and therefore its origins remain independent of this source.[261] As Lamis Andoni comments in reference to Islamic groups, such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad: "Neither were born out of the PLO womb and neither feels obliged, morally or politically, to adhere to policies that they had no part in formulating."[262] Hamas has substantiated this independent stance by continually asserting its willingness to remain outside the PLO umbrella, in spite of PLO enticements of seats on the Palestinian National Council (PNC). The importance of such assertions of independence cannot be underestimated when assessing its self-professed role as the only genuine counter-force to the power of the PLO in the Occupied Territories. As Kodmani-Darwish states:

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[260]. See Peretz, "Secular-Religious Tension Within the Palestinian Resistance Movement," p. 17.

> The movement does not want to bear responsibility for the

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[261]. Kodmani-Darwish, "Arafat and the Islamists," p. 31.

[262]. Lamis Andoni, "Palestinian opposition dominated by the right," *Middle East International*, 2 December, 1994. p. 18. In fact, as members of Hamas are at pains to stress, even in their infancy during the first year of the intifada they took pride in the fact that they operated independently of the PLO leadership calling for strikes and boycotts that had not been authorized by the UNLU. See Ahmad, *Hamas*, pp. 51,64.

> PLO's collapse. But if the PLO did collapse on its own because of the wrong choices it made, the Islamist movement would present itself as the only structured alternative with its own base within the population independent of the PLO and capable of relieving it.[263]

In effect, this statement summarizes the feeling held among many members of Hamas that only Hamas is a truly separate and independent alternative to the dominant power in the Occupied Territories, the PLO.

After having examined certain factors relevant to the creation of a counter-hegemonic force vis-a-vis its relation to the dominant power, it is now necessary to examine the actual strategy the counter-hegemon must conduct if it is to be successful in its revolutionary struggle. As suggested at the beginning of this section, such a strategy must be active, deliberate, and long-term, focusing on what Gramsci terms the 'war of position' and the 'war of movement.' In examining this dual strategy Gramsci presents in terms of the Palestinian Islamists, it is obvious that both components of the revolutionary struggle - the war of position and war of movement - can be interpreted, in the most general sense, as embodying the entire process of *jihad*, or holy struggle. Consequently, these two stages of the revolutionary struggle are interpreted by the Islamists as essentially a single process corresponding to the two stages of Muhammad's prophetic career, the Meccan phase (war of position), and the Medinan phase (war of movement). The final similarity between contemporary Islamists and Gramsci is the fundamental belief that while the 'war of movement' involves the actual seizure of power, it is the 'war of position' which must be considered the more important of the two processes.

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[263] Kodmani-Darwish, "Arafat and the Islamists," p. 29.

The 'war of position,' as Gramsci understands, involves first identifying, then penetrating, what he refers to as the "powerful system of fortresses"[264] or "trenches"[265] established by the State within civil society to protect its most important possession - state power itself. Therefore, the counter-hegemonic force must first influence or transform the fundamental beliefs and views of the individual, then the collective group, and finally civil society, if its hopes to reach that juncture where it can challenge the power of the hegemon for control of the State. Clearly, this type of 'war of position' has remained a principal strategy of the Muslim Brotherhood in Palestine. According to Ali Jarbawi:

> The Muslim Brotherhood hopes to bring about a truly Islamic society by first establishing authentic Islamic foundations and then, through these, by reforming the individual, and then society by means of an ordered and gradual plan designed to eventually bring about an Islamic state.[266]

Like Gramsci, the Muslim Brotherhood realized that the need to win over civil society to views and beliefs of the counter-hegemon must be accorded first priority. In other words, without an extensive infiltration of civil society, the eventuality of an Islamic state remained an impossibility. As Abu-Amr states: "According to the Brotherhood, armed struggle

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[264]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 238.

[265]. Ibid., pp. 235 and 243.

[266]. Jarbawi, "The Position of Palestinian Islamists on the Palestine-Israel Accord," p. 128.

(*jihad*) cannot be undertaken until society is reformed, until secular ideas are abandoned and Islam adopted."[267] Therefore, only when the Islamic transformation or "Islamization" of Palestinian society was complete[268] and society had returned to the true path of Islam and its basic message, would the conditions be established to allow for a *jihad* (holy war) in hopes of installing a truly Islamic state in the land of Palestine.[269] Consequently, it is clear that the Islamists share Gramsci's belief on the fundamental need to initially triumph over civil society if a counter-hegemonic force is going to be successful in the eventual acquisition of state power.

While the Islamists recognized the importance of first penetrating the 'trenches' of civil society in establishing their counter-hegemonic force, they also realized that the moment would occur when a 'war of position' must necessarily evolve into a 'war of movement.' In other words, there would come the point where direct confrontation would be necessary to achieve the greater aims of their movement. While such a transition from position to movement probably occurred sooner than they had hoped - before civil society had been fully 'won over' to the Islamic cause - clearly the outbreak of the *intifada*, like the Battle of Badr for Muhammad, was the event that forced such a change of strategy. As Litvak bluntly states: "In 1987 [with the outbreak of the *intifada*], the Brotherhood changed its approach, adopting a more nationalist and activist line, including the principle of armed struggle..."[270]

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[267]. Abu-Amr, "Hamas," p. 9.

[268]. See Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 23, Ahmad, *Hamas*, pp. 16, 17, and 34, and Legrain, "Hamas," p. 163.

[269]. *The Economist*, February 20, 1993. p. 39.

However, as previously stated, the war of position and the war of movement, as opposed to offering two separate stages of the conflict, are in fact one continuous process of a long-term strategy which has as its ultimate aim the overthrow of the ruling hegemonic power. For the Muslim Brotherhood, while it is clear that the *intifada* represented a clear shift in strategy, it is also evident that the two components of the revolutionary struggle remain intrinsically linked. According to Abu-Amr: "The Muslim Brotherhood claims that it laid the groundwork for the intifada [the war of position] and is directly responsible for its outbreak,"[271] while at the same time "this phase [the war of movement], characterized by actual resistance to the Israeli occupation, may be seen as a beginning of the actual *jihad* by the society."[272] Even in the Hamas Charter, the educational phase (war of position) and the confrontation phase (war of movement) are both perceived as forming the genesis of the overall revolutionary struggle. In other words, both are necessary components in the proper execution of *jihad*. According to the Charter:

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[270]. Litvak, "The West Bank and the Gaza Strip," p. 237.

[271]. Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza*, p. 60.

[272]. Ibid., p. 59.

> In the struggle against Jewish occupation of Palestine, the banner of *jihad* must be raised. That requires that Islamic education be passed to the masses locally, in the Arab (world), and in the Islamic (world), and that the spirit of *Jihad* - fighting and joining the ranks - must be broadcast among the *Umma* (Muslim community).[273]

Therefore, though each phase may be seen to represent a distinct stage of the conflict, both a war of position and a war of movement are part of a continuous process based on an active, deliberate, and long-term strategy.

One final element must be addressed in terms of any successful long-term strategy. This involves the need for patience, because as both an element of strategy and a quality of character its importance is indisputable. Gramsci emphasizes the need for patience in the counter-hegemonic endeavour and consistently argues against short term solutions in attempting to overthrow a hegemon surrounded by 'complex structures' and 'trench-like systems.' In terms of constructing a legitimate counter-hegemonic bloc, Gramsci argues: "The essential task is that of systematically and patiently ensuring that this force is formed, developed, and rendered more homogeneous, compact, and self-aware."[274]

The Islamists in Palestine share this belief in the virtue of patience and, like Muhammad, argue that in time the 'truth' of their endeavour will reap the rewards of God and victory. The Muslim Brotherhood readily demonstrated this belief in such a patient and long-term strategy through its attempts to meticulously and slowly transform Palestinian society from within.[275] While the *intifada* may have upset the plans of the Brotherhood and the Oslo Accords tipped the balance against the Islamic forces, the importance of patience and fortitude in the face of the struggle continues. According to Ali Al Jarbawi: "Thus, through a policy of practised patience, Hamas is gradually building the foundations for Palestinian public opinion that is opposed to the accords."[276] In relation to this virtue of patience the final word is reserved for Mahmud Zahhar, one of Hamas' principal spokesmen.

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[273]. *Hamas Charter*, Article 15.

[274]. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 185.

> Hamas is not in a hurry. We know that the PLO's practice will inevitably lead to its downfall... Communism had to be allowed to go to the end of its capacities, and it fell of its own weight.[277]

In the end, this remains an ominous reminder that for the Islamists, their struggle for supremacy in Palestine may have only just begun.

THE FUTURE

In terms of the future society that the Palestinian Islamists envision, it is clear that in this regard, they also share many similarities with Gramsci. In Chapter 3, it was shown how Gramsci is more interested in speaking in generalities - such as his notion of the importance of 'quality over quantity' and the idea of founding a new culture - than elaborating on the precise structures and characteristics such a state will possess. In the end, Gramsci is content to suggest that the universal desires of truth, freedom, equality, and justice, would be more easily constructed on the foundations of his more 'moral' society, though he gives little indication of what concrete form these 'moral' foundations may eventually assume.

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[275] According to Ahmad, this patience was duly demonstrated in the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood waited 20 years (1967-1987), in which it continued to socialize, educate, and prepare its followers, before it embarked on an active campaign against its oppressors. Ahmad, *Hamas*, p. 126.

[276] Jarbawi, "The Position of Palestinian Islamists on the Palestine-Israel Accord," p. 148.

[277] Zahhar, "Hamas," p. 83.

In reference to the future composition of the state and society, it is clear the Islamists - both in the case of Palestine, and more generally as represented in the works of such theorists as Qutb and Mawdudi - possess a similar vagueness regarding the specific features of their future state. In other words, like Gramsci, the Islamists tend to refer more to abstract generalities than to specific characteristics when describing their eventual state. In terms of their broad objectives for the future, Abu-Amr states that the Islamic groups in Palestine "seek to establish an Islamic state and apply Islamic principles in an Islamic society as an ultimate goal."[278] Therefore, as the Palestinian Islamists, Qutb and Mawdudi, and even Gramsci himself infer, though the specific aspects of such a state may not be meticulously developed, its inherently superior character will naturally provide foundations that will guarantee that such a society will be more just, equal, and fair than the present *'jahiliyyah'* society.

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[278]. Abu-Amr, Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza, p. 117.

The other component that the Islamists stress in terms of this future state is that the changes envisioned would be fundamental, complete, and comprehensive. According to Milton-Edwards:

> They [Hamas] strive (wage *Jihad*) to resurrect or create an Islamic way of life that encompasses not just the realm of religious practice, but the political, economic, and social order.[279]

Consequently, the Islamists' primary aim would be to assert a total domination over the state and society through their complete control over legislation, customs, and laws in the name of Islam.[280] It is not surprising that for the Islamists, as with every revolutionary movement, any future conception of the state and society is based on the need to control both the institutions of the state and all elements of civil society in the desire to promote their own particular world view over all others. In other words, all revolutionary movements understand that any future state must necessarily be based upon such totalitarian control because the ultimate objective becomes, above all else, the ability to prevent another counter-hegemonic force from repeating the success they themselves seek and desire to achieve.[281]

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[279]. Milton-Edwards, "Political Islam in Palestine in an environment of peace?" p. 220. For further evidence see the *Hamas Charter*, Article 2.

[280]. Litvak, "Palestinian Nationalism and Islam," p. 514.

[281]. This type of totalitarian State has not only occurred in those states where the Islamists have gained power - Iran, Afghanistan, Sudan - but has tended to be the common result in most countries suffering revolutionary upheaval (i.e., France, Russia, etc.,).

GRAMSCI AND HAMAS: AN INTERPRETATION

The argument has been put forth that Gramsci provides an appropriate method through which to explain the general phenomenon of political Islam, and more specifically, the development of the Islamic movement in Palestine. Consequently, if there does exist a universal pattern of revolutionary construction, can Gramsci's theory explain not only how a counter-hegemonic bloc can succeed, but also help demonstrate why a certain revolutionary movement has failed? In fact, this may represent the greatest worth the Gramscian methodological framework possesses for analysing the phenomenon of political Islam in Palestine.

In the case of Palestine, it is clear at the present time that the Islamist movement has failed to achieve its ultimate aim of supplanting the PLO as the hegemonic or dominant force in the Occupied Territories. If this is true, then can Gramsci's theoretical framework help to explain why the Islamists have been unsuccessful? In this section, it will be argued that one of the principal factors accounting for the Islamists' failures has been their crucial lack of 'unity,' not just at critical junctures in the movements' history, but in terms of their overall ideology, organization, and strategy. Most succinctly, this disunity is epitomized by the fundamental divisions apparent between the older, more pragmatic members, and the younger, more radical supporters.

In terms of ideology, it is evident there exists a fundamental division between Palestinians who tend to support

Hamas for its conservative and religious orientation, and those who are clearly drawn to Hamas because of its nationalist and 'revolutionary' appeal. As Graham Usher asserts, these differences have become even more pronounced in the changed atmosphere of the Oslo Accords. According to Usher: "Reconciling these strains of social conservatism and radical nationalism within the same movement is the dilemma Hamas faces on the changed terrain of autonomy."[282] In others words, many of Hamas' supporters are more concerned with its social and religious pronouncements, while others believe its political role as a force of national liberation to be the most important function of the contemporary Islamic movement in Palestine.

In addition to the ideological disputes, clearly an organizational schism has developed that brings into question the degree to which Hamas still exhibits the type of 'organic unity' Gramsci deems so essential for any counter-hegemonic force. When examining the different sections within Hamas (see organization), it was clear that with various branches of the movement responsible for fundamentally different aspects of the organization's overall strategy - military, political, charitable - a split between the various wings, or even within a specific branch, was a real possibility. Consequently, by 1996, it appeared that the organization's internal polarization had openly splintered between its more hard-line military wing and the more moderate members of the movement.[283] Clearly, the rash of suicide bombings in the spring of 1996 is indicative of the fundamental nature of that split.[284]

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[282]. Graham Usher, "After the Tel Aviv bombing," *Middle East International*, 4 November, 1994. p.9.

However, the most pronounced division within the Islamic movement in the Occupied Territories would seem to be those over strategy, both in terms of what could be called disagreements on strategies and tactics relating to the war of position versus the war of movement, and in a more general sense, over the group's future directions. Earlier, it was examined how even the founding of Hamas represented a significant split within the monolithic character of the Palestinian Islamist organization, as many younger members felt it incumbent on the movement to join in the actual resistance to Israeli occupation. According to Budeiri, this earlier split within the Brotherhood can be generally summarized as follows.

> The former are conservative, quietist, subservient to authority, inward looking, and generally shy away from political involvement or commitment; considerable numbers had been employed by the Jordanian Awqaf Ministries. The latter are primary street activists, youthful nationalists disenchanted with what they regard as the PLO's abandonment of the commitment to independent statehood and armed struggle in search of an organizational framework in which to pursue anti-occupation activities.[285]

This earlier division in the movement, which led to Hamas' creation as a separate wing of the Brotherhood, continues to detrimentally effect Islamist efforts at unity. Hamas' responses to the Oslo Peace Accords, the stationing of Palestinian troops in Gaza and West Bank towns,[286] and participation in general elections,[287] have all continued to divide the movement and prevent it from presenting a truly unified front in terms of a coherent ideology, organization, and strategy.

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[283]. Jarbawi, "Palestinian Politics at a Crossroads," p. 33.

[284]. *The Economist,* March 9, 1996. p. 15.

[285]. Budeiri, "The Nationalist Dimension of Islamic Movements in Palestinian Politics," pp. 92-93.

In terms of overall strategy, this division can probably be best summarized as a situation in which the old guard still promotes a reformist approach based on the re-Islamization of society in the basic principles of the movement (war of position), while the younger segments of the organization believe that success lies along the path of military vanguardism and directly confronting the Israeli occupation (war of movement).[288] Understandably, divisions within any movement are commonplace. Yet, in the absence of a strong and unified leadership to coalesce the organization behind one principal plan of action - caused in part by large-scale deportations and imprisonments - Gramsci demonstrates that not only does his framework conceptualize the construction of the proper counter-hegemonic force, but also demonstrates that the absence of such criteria can lead to the eventual downfall and even disintegration of such a 'revolutionary' force.

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[286]. In other words, the leadership has debated the extent to which Hamas should co-operate with their new PLO masters. See Derek Brown, "Hamas may join talks," *The Guardian Weekly*, October 15, 1995. p. 3.

[287]. Legrain, "Hamas," p. 173.

[288]. For some examples see Legrain, "Hamas," pp. 170 and 173, Milton-Edwards, "Political Islam in Palestine in an environment of peace?" p. 216, and *The Economist*, May 13, 1995. p. 40.

CONCLUSION

Much has changed since the implementation of the Oslo Accords in September 1993. While ideological, organizational, and strategic divisions within the Islamic movement in Palestine, especially Hamas, have all played a role in weakening the Islamist forces, other factors have also contributed to the Islamists' current dilemma. It is clear that for Arafat and the PLO the Oslo Accords have had the desired effects. Through a gradual diffusion of administrative means (e.g., taxation) and repressive powers (e.g., police force and justice system), the P.A. is asserting more control and continues to reinforce its dominance over Palestinian society. Consequently, it is partially this growing dominance of the PLO that has allowed them to foment divisions within Hamas, and in the process, 'decapitate' the potential threat of the Islamists.

Clearly, a fundamental change has been occurring in the Occupied Territories since the signing of the Oslo Accords. This study has tried to recognize the fact that the Palestinian case is distinct (i.e., a worst case scenerio) because the Islamists are confronting what can be termed a 'double-hegemon.' Yet, what the developments of the last few years demonstrate is that if the Israelis sustain their pull back from the region the PLO will continue to assume the characteristics more approximating that of a true hegemonic power.[289] This is not to deny that the Palestinian case is distinct as Gramsci would recognize, all national contexts are unique in a certain sense. Nor is it to imply that the Israelis will no longer continue to play a prominent role in the Occupied Territories. However, it is clear the Oslo Accords have entrenched the dominant status of the PLO at the expense of the Islamists. In the future, it would seem the position of the PLO, as the principal force the Islamists are trying to overthrow in their counter-hegemonic attempts, will become a clearer indication of the applicability of a Gramscian theoretical framework to Palestine.

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[289]. In this case, a good example may be that of Egypt after the Second World War, when a retreating Britain transformed the Muslim Brotherhood from a force primarily concerned with fighting Western colonialism to that of a 'true' counter-hegemonic force desiring the overthrow of first the indigenous Royalist forces and subsequently the Nasser regime.

CONCLUSION: CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS STUDY

It is the hope of the author that the application of Gramsci's theory to political Islam in general, and more specifically, the distinct Palestinian context, has assisted in furthering an understanding of a very complex and much misinterpreted phenomenon. The application of a Gramscian theoretical framework to political Islam can hopefully provide us with insights that seem to have been obscured by reactions of the Western media and American scholars. To many in the West, the use of Islam as an instrument of political protest has led to a demonization of not only its adherents, but also the entire Islamic religion. According to this view, political Islam is probably one of the greatest threats that currently exists, not only to those people in the region it professes to save, but more importantly, to the overall security of the Western world and its vested international interests.

However, this study has also sought to make an original contribution to the field of political science and the specific role of social movements through the ability of human beings (as Gramsci would state 'man') to impact and change their external environment. In this sense, Gramsci's application to the issue of political Islam has focused on the practical seizure of power and the need to create an active revolutionary force. Furthermore, it is hoped that Gramsci has assisted in creating a consistent link within the study of political Islam by establishing a continuum between Muhammad (the first 'Islamic revolutionary) and contemporary movements such as Hamas. Thus, it will be argued that Gramsci's most original contribution to political Islam has been his conceptualization of the revolutionary process as represented by two separate, but interrelated stages - the 'war of position' and the 'war of movement.'

In terms of future research, the hope is to focus on the more normative elements of political Islam movements. Most fundamentally, has the evolution of these Islamic movements been in fact a positive or negative development? On the one hand, have they had a positive impact on the overall political process or are they to blame for much of the strife and violence currently experienced in several Muslim states (e.g., Algeria, Egypt)? On the other hand, more empirically, should the acquisition of State power always be seen simply as an end in itself or is it the role of the revolutionary/counter-hegemonic force to aspire to some loftier or higher ideal? Is there hope that the counter-hegemon can somehow elevate the human condition to a higher plateau, and in the process, work for the general benefit of the people to whom it promises the hope of something better? Therefore, any future research should focus not solely on the causes that give rise to these social movements, but also the unforeseen consequences - the ideal aspirations and their concrete application to the practical situation - inasmuch as the future envisioned by the counter-hegemon is not only possible, but also desirable.

In terms of the demonization of political Islam in the West, it is clear that the apparent differences between many of the rituals of the Islamic religion and Christianity have contributed to the perception in the West of the alien nature of Islamic movements. This reaction is especially true in the case of the United States. The United States' response has been to take a singularly aggressive stance against all Muslim movements, regardless of their orientation or context, by denying them any legitimacy, either in their grievances or their actions. Yet, these movements have demonstrated that in the Muslim world today they remain the most popular and dynamic vehicles for expressing discontent with the current socio-economic order. Consequently, as Islamic movements in such diverse countries as Algeria, Turkey, and Palestine have all demonstrated, they can neither be wished away nor eradicated simply through government sanctioned violence or policies of extermination.

The use of a Gramscian framework is an effective way to comprehend more thoroughly the rise and spread of political Islam, while avoiding the stereotypes associated with much of Western research. Consequently, the utilization of Gramsci's theory is intended to make political Islam more comprehensible by presenting an inherently indigenous phenomenon in terms of

Western concepts and terminology. Through a Gramscian framework it can be demonstrated that while the growth of political Islam is a particular phenomenon concentrated in a certain region of the world, its evolution can be interpreted in terms of developments occurring far beyond its place of origin. Thus, political Islam is not simply an anarchical development rooted in foreign rituals and strange beliefs, but an easily understandable reaction to a universal phenomenon - a stunted process of economic development and democratization. In other words, it is the lack of mass economic benefit and a more open political process which has provided the Islamists with fertile ground on which to advocate the overthrow of the current socio-economic order. In this sense, Gramsci and his theory of 'active revolutionary construction' seems to provide a more appropriate interpretation of a complex phenomenon than those distorted and obstructed by the biases and prejudices of many within the Western-centric academic community.

In examining the rise of 'Political Islam' within the Muslim world, it is clear these contemporary movements share certain features with previous 'revolutionary' organizations, both in Islam and throughout the world. Therefore, political Islam should not, in and of itself, be viewed as a historically unique phenomenon. Recent developments in the Muslim world have their parallel in previous historical events, especially in the Western world. As such, one of the most significant implications of current developments in the Islamic world is the confirmation that, whenever severe changes occur and elites attempt to retain absolute political control in the face of such circumstances, revolution or social upheaval has been a common result. In the Islamic world, the success achieved by Muhammad demonstrates that even the first Muslim leader, through his desire to pursue radical economic, political and social transformation, embarked on a process of revolutionary change.

In its contemporary context, the growth of modern Islamic organizations share many similarities with the 'radical' European socialist and communist movements that evolved in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In both situations, these movements originate in response to grievances created primarily by elite attempts at rapid capitalist expansion and industrialization. However, the primary objection of the masses is not with an economic process that is progressing too fast, but one that is not developing quickly enough in that, far from a more equitable distribution of wealth, the result is an ever-widening gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots.' When the promise of economic benefits remains unfulfilled and even basic necessities become scarce, a restrictive political structure reinforces the perception of government incompetence. In addition, the corresponding social and cultural dislocation -

urbanization and the loss of 'traditional' ways of life - brought about by rapid change, leads to feelings of increased subjective deprivation and a demand for a more equitable redistribution of political, social, and economic resources. As a result, both the older European 'radical' movements and contemporary Islamic organizations were created primarily as vehicles of political protest to express a deep-seated discontent with the status quo and a rejection of the existing order. In the end, both movements possess the ability to portray themselves as the only viable alternative to a regime that no longer seems to offer the masses any legitimate hope for comprehensive and fundamental change.

The final similarity between the older 'radical' European organizations and the contemporary Islamic movements is the projected future state and society they envision. In both cases, these movements are more united in what they oppose - the current entrenched elites and their enforced socio-economic structure - and less clear about what should constitute the exact form of any future state. Consequently, like Gramsci, the Islamists may protest and oppose the current system, but they have not given any evidence of what is to follow beyond a utopian or messianic raising of expectations. The Islamists have seldom articulated any well-thought-out and reasoned political and economic programme they wish to implement once in power. Similarly, as examined in Chapter 3, Gramsci dedicated very little time in providing any specific details regarding his post-revolutionary program, except to argue that any society built on such foundations would necessarily be a more just, equal, and moral one.

However, it is also clear that political Islam represents an altogether unique phenomenon that can not be reduced to, or simply explained as, an extension of previous Western reactions to attempted economic development and democratization. The contemporary Islamic movements that have developed throughout the Muslim world, especially since the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, clearly represent an indigenous response to a specific set of difficulties framed within the context of a distinct socio-political environment. In fact, the Islamists have been singularly able to provide the only credible alternative to the masses disillusioned and marginalized by the existing order, to the extent that other 'liberationist' ideologies (e.g., communist) have been intentionally discarded.

In the current environment, it is Islam - as an instrument of political protest - which has been best able to express the social, economic, and political injustices experienced by a large segment of the masses. For, it is the Islamists who have been able to conceptualize most effectively these difficulties by situating them within a moral and religious framework, thus giving their purpose and objectives a higher meaning that other 'ideologies' cannot offer. In this sense, violence is not random and indiscriminate, but justified as necessary for achieving the objective of freedom and equality. By propagating or espousing revolution through Islamic vocabulary, imagery, and symbolism, it is the Islamists who continue to articulate most effectively the hardships experienced by many in contemporary Muslim societies. Consequently, it is the Islamists who have been most able to make sense of these difficulties, while their calls for justice, empowerment, and a more equitable distribution of resources continue to find a receptive audience among the Muslim masses.

To many in the West, the use of the Islamic religion as an instrument of political protest is perceived to be simply a reflection of the inherent nature of Islam itself. Yet the reason it provides the only authentic 'political' alternative to the ruling regime is because Islamic concepts and symbols already resonate so deeply with such a large segment of the population. The masses were nurtured on such rituals and ideas and, to many, Islam has a legitimacy that no other 'ideology' can attain. At present, there already exists a strong, deep-seated relationship between Islamic vocabulary and imagery and the substantive objectives pursued by the Islamists. Consequently, in the event that the Islamists do achieve political power and economic control within a specific state, they will not abandon the Islamic rhetoric because in Muslim societies legitimacy is perceived to derive only from Islam. In the case of Iran, it is only the appeal to Islam, and the regime's supposed adherence to Islam, that continues to bestow a degree of legitimacy upon the government.

The exploration of political Islam, and the need to grasp a clearer understanding of its true implications is especially important because as a global phenomenon it remains grievously misunderstood. There has been a tendency on the part of academics and journalists, particularly in the West, to focus on the surface articulations of the Islamists, instead of probing the deeper causes. Admittedly, this tendency has been strengthened by the statements of the Islamists themselves whose mobilizational rhetoric seems to highlight the Islamic articulation, rather than the political and economic grievances.

However, in spite of the Western media's negative portrayal of the Islamists, and the hurling of the epitath of 'international terrorist' and 'global criminal,' this study has sought to emphasize that both the leaders and supporters of Islamic movements are not the deviants, social misfits, or terrorists they are depicted as in the West. Even the common use of the term 'fundamentalist,' which this study has deliberately chosen to reject, is to infer the perceived irrationality of these movements and their followers. Their portrayal in the Western media, during such events as the Iranian hostage crisis, protests in the Occupied Territories, or unrest in southern Lebanon, lead most commentators to denounce these individuals as fanatics, blindly adhering to a doctrine they either misinterpret or do not really fully comprehend. It has been customary in the West to brand members of organizations such as Hamas - and even the PLO before it - as terrorists and criminals whose behaviour is not only punishable by law, but morally reprehensible and beyond the pale of a civilized society. In a 'black or white world' the Muslim society, with its foreign rituals and its unique culture, already appears alien to many in the West. The subsequent 'demonization' of the Islamists simplifies a complex phenomenon, making it easier to criticize and persecute than to understand and explain.

It has been the tendency and desire of the West to assume a singular position towards all Islamic movements regardless of many of their fundamental differences, that has led them to reject every and all demands put forth by the Islamists. Consequently, in spite of their important differences and the various means they promote to attain their objectives - from parliamentary activism and reform to revolutionary violence - they are all "painted with the same brush." There has been unwillingness by the West to examine the important distinctions between the various Islamic movements, which has led to uniform support in the repression of these groups. Yet it would seem that the participation of these movements in parliamentary government would signal a positive development for both the general masses within these countries and to the state itself in its attempts to dampen their revolutionary appeal. In countries such as Egypt and Algeria, the constant repression of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Salvation Front has tended to lead to more violence and further instability. In addition, the attempts made by the Virtue Party in Turkey to participate in the democratic process has been predictably met with continuing attempts by the elites to marginalize the Islamists and in the process force them and their supporters to contemplate more violent methods in articulating their political demands.

In terms of its global ramifications, the fear exhibited by the West towards these upstart movements, especially the reaction of the United States, represent a predictable response in which the dominant powers in the international system seek to prevent any potential disruption of the current distribution of power. In other words, all international hegemonic powers have opposed any 'new' or dynamic force they perceive to be a legitimate threat to both the status quo and, more specifically, their own narrowly defined interests. In this sense, the Islamists can once more be viewed within the same context as the communist movements that originated in

Europe at the turn of the century. These movements developed primarily as a result of the increasing disillusionment experienced by a growing segment of the population within a specific state, which in turn sought to express this discontent through the forcible overthrow of the elites that stood as a bulwark behind this 'enforced' structure. Yet, while these challenges were clearly national in orientation, it has been customary for the threatened hegemon to portray the followers of these movements - both communist and Islamic - as irrational, fanatical, and hence, as a potential threat to global welfare and security.

However, it can be persuasively argued that political Islam now poses a much more serious threat to global security (i.e., the interests of the dominant powers) than the challenge presented by communism during the height of the Cold War for two primary reasons. First, the Muslim states of the Middle East occupy a territorially strategic location, in addition to possessing the largest deposits of oil in the world. While communism provided the Western world with a political and ideological opponent, its economic threat was significantly less potent. In the Middle East, there seems little chance that the West, especially the United States, would permit a Islamist take-over similar to that which occurred in Iran. Consequently, the repercussions of an American invasion into the Muslim world, especially a state such as Saudi Arabia -

the possessor of the two most holy sites in Islam - would certainly elicit an extremely violent response, and in the process, poison relations between the West and the Muslim world for many years to come.

Second, the world at the end of the twentieth century is undergoing constant and fundamental changes and consequently, is an altogether different place than it was even a decade ago at the end of the Cold War. With astonishing advances in technology and communications the world has reached an unprecedented level of interdependence and interconnectedness. Of course, while this 'global village' continues to provide numerous benefits, it also produces many unintended consequences. Therefore, in contrast to the past epoch of communism and the U.S. - Soviet Cold War, modern advances have created a world where unimpeded travel and communication can no longer distance threats and prevent regional grievances from spreading undetected across national borders. As long as aspirations for change remain unheeded in the Muslim world, and the West is seen to be contributing to the relative deprivation of the Muslim masses, these 'distant' Western states will continue to be perceived as legitimate targets for Islamic violence. With both the intention of violence and the environment of permeability the possibility of increased international terrorism and global insecurity can only be ignored at one's peril.

At present, the United States' policy in the region has remained uniform in its outlook. The U.S. has constantly sought to ally itself - both politically and militarily - with those Muslim regimes in the Middle East which have, for the most part, unequivocally rejected compromising with the Islamists and have consistently opposed permitting their participation in the formal political process (e.g., Turkey, Egypt, and Algeria). In each case, the actual degree of popular support garnered by the Islamists, or their professed desire for reformist measures and adherence to the rules of parliamentary democracy have been deemed insufficient to the outside powers. In the view of the United States, there is an unquestioned need to collaborate with the indigineous governments, regardless of their commitment to democracy and human rights, to prevent the Islamists from aquiring a significant political power base. In the view of the U.S., the Islamists remain the greatest potential threat to important national interests in the region.

However, while American policy may provide a semblance of security in the short term, it would seem that such a long-term policy is inherently unstable and therefore flawed. For it is clear that such blind co-operation between the U.S. and its allies in the Middle East does not address the fundamental problems that continue to permeate throughout society in the region and fails to alleviate the suffering of the disadvantaged. As the example of radical communist and socialist movements in the West demonstrated (e.g., Britain, Germany, France, and Italy), it was only when fundamental change occurred - greater democracy and a more equitable redistribution of wealth - that these movements began to lose their general appeal. Consequently, once the masses became satisfied that other alternatives were available for the voicing of dissent, revolutionary options no longer posed a formidable threat to the ruling powers.

In terms of the impact of this study on the overall field of political science and its contributions to the literature, the hope has been to demonstrate the ability of 'man' (i.e., human beings) to change his surroundings and his environment. In this sense, people are not simply the passive receptors of their external environment but active agents in the making of history and thus the constructing of social forces. Consequently, this study has emphasized the role the application of Gramsci's theory performs in focusing on the practical elements of counter-hegemonic construction in the actual and concrete seizure of power. For without the acquistion of the concrete and tangible reins of power, all theoretical declarations are reduced to little more than utopian wranglings and wishful thinking. As history has consistently demonstrated, it has only been those revolutionary movements that have suceeded in capturing State power - Jacobins in France, Communists in Russia, Islamists in Iran - who had the opportunity to practically implement their beliefs and values (i.e., ideologies) into reality. This is clearly one of Gramsci's most important contributions to the whole question of social movements and the revolutionary process.

More specifically, in terms of Gramsci's unique contribution, the attempt has been made to demonstrate that the application of a Gramscian framework to the phenomenon of political Islam can establish a consistent link - or a continuum - from *jahiliyyah* to the present. Consequently, Gramsci can assist in conceptualizing the aims and role of the Islamic revolutionary organization from the time of Muhammad to the development of contemporary movements, such as Hamas. All these movements share a common presentation in terms of a coherent of beliefs (i.e., a political doctrine), and are represented by the practical manifestations of this 'ideology' through their similar bases of social support. In addition, Gramsci's emphasis on the importance of a coherent ideology, unified organization, and long-term strategy encapsulate the fundamental traits all active revolutionary movements (i.e., counter-hegemonic forces) must assume if they are to be successful in actually seizing political power.

However, it is probably in terms of Gramsci's unique conceptualization of the revolutionary process as two distinct, yet interlinked stages (i.e., the 'war of position' and the 'war of movement') through which a Gramscian framework provides the most original contribution to the study of the entire revolutionary process. These two phases are clearly exhibited in all the writings of the principal Islamist writers and in their practical application to the concrete situation. Whether it is the evolution of the first Islamic movement under the direction of the Prophet Muhammad, or more contemporary Islamic movements such as Hamas, all Islamists focus on these two stages as crucial components of the process, the aim of which is the construction of an authentic Islamic state. To the Islamists, the 'war of position' is presented as that stage where the attempt is made to first reform the individual and educate one in the principles of Islam. While the Islamists equate this stage with Muhammad's "Meccan phase" it clearly proximate Gramsci's own views on the 'war of position.' Consequently, it is only after individual hearts have been changed to the ways of Islam, that the actual seizure of state power can be sought. Clearly, on a theoretical level, this is how Gramsci conceptualized the 'war of movement,' while in its practical manifestation this is how Muhammad did actually seize power as represented by his "Medinan phase" and his conquest of Mecca in 630. Consequently, it is through Gramsci's detailed examination of the counter-hegemonic program and the exploration of the two separate, yet interlinked stages of the revolutionary process, through which Gramsci makes the most original contribution to the study of contemporary Islamic movements and in fact the entire revolutionary process.

Of course, one must inquire as to whether Gramsci was aware of Muhammad's 'revolutionary' achievements and if he took them into consideration in his own writings. As a student of history and a universal knowledge of its evolution one could probably assume that Gramsci was conscious of Muhammad's achievements and that his actions played a role in influencing, if only subtly, Gramsci's own views. Gramsci understood that the type of counter-hegemonic project he sought could in fact originate in one man, and that one strong individual, assured of the righteousness of his cause, and determined in its application could change the course of history. There are probably few better examples of such an individual as the Prophet Muhammad. For even fourteen centuries after his death, one-fifth of all human civilization stills follows his teachings and remains committed to the beliefs and values he fought for 1400 years ago.

Finally, the recommendations for future research would address the need to appreciate Gramsci's contributions not only in terms of specific Islamic movements, such as Hamas, but also in more general terms related to an examination of the entire revolutionary process and the contemporary role and impact (i.e., benefit) of social movements. On the one hand, Gramsci was most fundamentally concerned with the concrete environment through which revolutionary activity occurred. Therefore, one would suggest there is even a greater need to appreciate the causes and circumstances that give rise to these movements. The twentieth century has been a period of profound and rapid change and the seeming universal desire for greater political freedom and enhanced material satisfaction will continue to provide fertile ground for these movements well into the next century. Consequently, until the blatant inequalities and problems of chronic underdevelopment are addressed regimes throughout the Muslim world - and around the world - will continue to lack the legitimacy, if not the support, of a significant proportion of its population.

In a more normative sense, one must address the question as to whether the evolution of these Islamic movements, and other counter-hegemonic or revolutionary movements, are in and of themselves positive vehicles for change. In this sense, if one takes as its standard the case of the Islamists' ascension to power in Iran, or the Communists' seizure of State in the Soviet Union, one is left with the impression that in these cases, one group, or group of elites, simply supplanted another. While these elites obviously gained from their newfound positions of power and influence, it is difficult to see what, if any, significant benefits were extended to the greater masses. In fact, one could argue that these revolutions worked to the overall detriment of the general population, making their lives more difficult and less free than they previously were. As a result, in both cases, it would seem that the higher ideals sought in elevating the human condition fell victim to the naked struggle for power and the ultimate objective of retaining power against any and all potential challengers.

However, history has also demonstrated those cases in which the ideals and dreams fought for by both the revolutionary elites and their 'common' followers have been successful. Both the American and French revolutions it can be argued played a role in changing the human condition of its citizens for the better. While war, slaughter, and terror were an unavoidable consequence, in the long term, both revolutions assisted in ushering in a steady process of constitutional and partcipatory democracy, where individuals were no longer hostage to the whims and desires of tyrants and monarchs. For our purposes, the case of Muhammad would suggest, while far from ideal, Muhammad did create a 'better,' more progressive society than the one that previously existed.

It should be to this normative feature that much of future research is directed. Consequently, if political Islamic movements exist as vehicles for change, can one foresee if such change is in fact positive, progressive? If the inherent liberal belief remains in the progressive nature of 'man' and these movements can assist in emancipating humans from the chains that currently bind a large proportion of the world, perhaps the theorist should aim to practice what he or she preaches. In practically assisting the forces behind these movements, a change may occur in which the political scientist is no longer merely a theorist and primarily concerned in describing past events, but performs a more active and practical role in working to bring about such positive developments. In this sense, the contribution is to not simply attempt to understand why the world is the way it is, but to try to fundamentally transform it to the way one believes it could be.

It is clear that the phenomenon of political Islam is not simply a 'flash in the pan.' It is going to dominate the political landscape of Muslim regimes for decades to come. Its impact continues to be felt throughout the entire Islamic world, from Morocco in the west to the Philippines in the east, from the newly emerging former Soviet states of Central Asia in the north to the Indian continent in the south. In any state where there is a substantial Muslim population and authoritarian or totalitarian regimes that refuse to permit any significant political participation, the opportunity exists for Islam to be transformed into a 'political' ideology of freedom, equality, and social justice. As much as communism provided the last great scare for the westernized elites and was transformed into the arch enemy of the liberal capitalist world, political Islam has the potential to develop into even more ominous an opponent.

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APPENDIX

THE TIMES AND LIFE OF MUHAMMAD

Muhammad was born in the city of Mecca in Central Arabia, sometime around the year 570 C.E., though the exact date is not definitively known. At this point, it is important to understand the context of Meccan society and consequently, the early impact it had upon Muhammad's life. For it was this environment that would most substantially influence Muhammad's prophetic career and the early message of Islam.

Mecca, situated in Central Arabia, was outside the control of the two great empires of the time. The Byzantine Empire was in the north-west with its capital at Constantinople. This was, of course, the remnant of the once-proud Roman Empire. In the northeast was situated the Persian Empire of the Sassinid dynasty. While both empires sought allies within Arabia, the central region where Muhammad was born was deemed too barren and isolated and remained outside the direct control of the two dominant empires of the time.

In fact, until approximately the middle of the sixth century, the central region of Arabia remained sparsely populated, consisting almost exclusively of small groups of marauding and warring nomadic Bedouin tribes. Their primary element of subsistence was the *'razzia'* or raid wherein the bedouin would raid other tribes out of necessity to survive, acquiring those things they needed but did not possess. It is easy to understand that during this period the life of the nomad could be best described as 'nasty, brutish, and short.'

Mecca itself was founded by a man named Qurayy sometime in the early fifth century. According to Caesar Farah:

> Here around 400 A.D. an impoverished segment of the Kiranah which had been associated with Kinda, the only confederation of tribes known to have existed in Arabia before Islam, renounced its nomadism and settled down in one of the bleakest of surroundings where agriculture was impossible. Since trading was about the only means of survival available to them, these once scattered migrating kingroups found common ties as middlemen (in trade). Henceforth, they are known to history as the Quraysh.[1]

The Quraysh would remain the dominant tribe in this region until the time of Muhammad.

The position of Mecca within Central Arabia was greatly enhanced in the middle of the sixth century (approximately 550). While the region had been scarcely populated previous to this period, it was at this time that the Great Marib Dam, which helped to irrigate Yemen in the south, collapsed. This forced many indigenous Yemenis to migrate towards the inner region of the Arabia peninsula.[2] The collapse of the dam, in addition to the Abyssinian occupation of Yemen (approximately

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[1]. Farah, *Islam*, p. 21.

[2]. See Rodinson, *Muhammad*, pp. 34-35 and John B. Christopher, *The Islamic Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 12.

525-575), significantly contributed to the expanded role of Mecca in the desert trade.[3] Mecca stood conveniently at the crossroads of the two major trade routes of Arabia. On the eastern coast of the Red Sea the Hijaz Road linked the Yemen with Syria, Palestine, and Transjordan, while the Najd Road linked the Yemen with Iraq.[4] By the time of Muhammad's birth and throughout the early part of his life there had grown a distinctive wealthy upper elite within the Quraysh tribe of Mecca who had greatly prospered from this expanding caravan trade.

Of course, trade was not the only factor which accounted for the Quraysh tribe's dominance or hegemonic position in Mecca. The Kabah, the principal pagan shrine in Arabia, also helped to make Mecca the main cultural and religious centre in the region.[5] All the tribes throughout the peninsula would come to Mecca during the holy months to pray to their own particular deities. Consequently, not only did this bring the Quraysh, as guardians of the sanctuary, increased trade, but also increased their prestige throughout the region.[6] For

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[3]. Christopher, *The Islamic Tradition*, p. 12.

[4]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 66. Also see Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 35.

[5]. See Glubb, *The Life and Times of Muhammad*, p. 61.

[6]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 66.

Farah, these two factors, the economic and the ideological, the structure and the superstructure, greatly aided in reinforcing the dominant position of the Quraysh in Central Arabia.

> **The mustering of economic power through the control of transit trade and the housing of pagan deities in the Kabah under their supervision gave the Quraysh an enviable position of influence and contributed to their rising status. Mecca had become the centre of pilgrimage and the hub of economic life in West Arabia.**[7]

In other words, both through the economic structure and the corresponding superstructure of ideas and beliefs, the Quraysh tribe was clearly the hegemonic force within the region. It was within this environment that Muhammad was born in approximately 570 C.E.

There is very little actually known about the early life of Muhammad. Muhammad was born into the Hashim clan of the Quraysh tribe. His father died before Muhammad was born, while his mother died when he was only six. After being cared for by his grandfather for a couple of years Muhammad was then raised by his paternal uncle, Abu Talib, a Meccan merchant. His status as an orphan clearly affected his early development. This is reflected in the degree of sympathy the Koran allots to the plight of orphans at a time when birth rite meant a great deal. While examples referring to the need to show kindness and compassion towards orphans can be found throughout the Koran, Muhammad's own situation is perhaps best addressed in the verse:

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[7]. **Farah, *Islam*, p. 31.**

> Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter? Did He not find you in error and guide you? Did He not find you poor and enrich you?[8]

Two developments of significance are offered by Muhammad's biographies as having had the greatest impact on his early life. The first is that the Hashim, the clan within the Quraysh tribe to which Muhammad belonged, was beginning to lose its dominant position within the Meccan political scene. This development originated in the 570s with the death of Muhammad's grandfather ʽAbd al-Muttalib. While the Banu Hashim seemed to have faced little internal opposition to its rule prior to this time, subsequently it appears as though the clan of the Banu Umayyah was gradually taking over the leadership of Mecca.[9] Consequently, the marginalizing of the Banu Hashim's position within the overall structure of the Quraysh tribe would later play an instrumental role in garnering support for Muhammad's movement against the dominant position of the "inner Quraysh."[10]

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[8]. *The Koran*, 93:6.

[9]. Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 54.

[10]. For a complete genealogy of the various clans within the Quraysh at the time of Muhammad, the best source is Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca*, pp. 4-8. Also see Farah, *Islam*, p. 34.

The second important influence in Muhammad's early upbringing was Muhammad's uncle, Abu Talib, a Meccan merchant. As a consequence of Abu Talib's profession, Muhammad would accompany his uncle with various trade caravans to the north into present day Syria. It was here that Muhammad was first influenced by the Monotheistic Christians of the north. One such story tells how Muhammad, around the age of twelve, travelled to Syria and was said to have befriended a Christian monk, Bahira.[11] It was at this time that Muhammad was first exposed to the monotheistic beliefs of the Christians. It was these early encounters that would eventually influence many of the core beliefs of the infant Muslim community. According to Haykal:

> There, too, he would listen to the speeches of Christian and Jewish Arabs who strongly criticized the paganism of their fellow countrymen, who told about the scriptures of Jesus and Moses, and called men to what they believed to be the truth.[12]

It is clear that the roots of monotheism - 'One God' - were planted in the consciousness of Muhammad at an early age, and consequently, these ideas manifested themselves when his dissatisfaction with Meccan society became increasingly prominent.

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[11]. Farah, *Islam*, p. 30.

[12]. Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 55.

The period between his youth and his calling at the age of 40 in 610 remains, for the most part, a mystery. However, in the works of all the biographies of the Prophet, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, the general consensus is that Muhammad was a deeply respected person who was held in high esteem by his fellow citizens. Muhammad was known as *'al-Amin,'* the reliable or trustworthy one.[13] His marriage to Khadija, a wealthy widow fifteen years his senior, is such a case in point. According to Ibn Ishaq, the first biographer of Muhammad, Khadija's reasons for marrying him were as follows: "I [Khadija] like you because of our relationship ... and your high reputation among your people, your trustworthiness, and good character, and truthfulness."[14] Even Maxine Rodinson, a secular Marxist, addresses the important role Muhammad's character played during this period. According to Rodinson:

> Even at this stage [prior to his calling], people must have been struck by his intelligence, and his calm, confident and balanced manner of conducting himself both in his own affairs and in his dealings with others.[15]

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[13]. See Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 78, and Royster, "Muhammad as Teacher and Exemplar," pp. 252-253.

[14]. Ibn Ishaq as quoted in Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 80.

[15]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 49.

In fact, this conception of Muhammad as an individual held in high esteem by many of his fellow townspeople should not seem surprising. For Muhammad must have been greatly respected for so many Meccans to accept his revelations as the actual word of God and he himself as a true Prophet.

It was in approximately 610, at the age of forty, that Muhammad received his first revelation from God. Prior to his calling Muhammad would often travel to the Cave of Hira outside of Mecca to meditate, pray, and deliberate on the fundamental questions of life and death, good and evil, and the problems he perceived as crucial to the contemporary malaise of his hometown. It was during one of these sessions that a voice first told Muhammad to recite. While Muhammad replied that he was illiterate and could not read, twice more the voice ordered him to recite. Finally the voice called out: "Recite in the name of your Lord who created - created man from clots of blood. Recite! Your Lord is the most Bountiful One, who by the pen taught man what he did not know."[16] In terms of this revelation to recite, Watt states:

> There are no effective objections to the almost universal view of Muslim scholars that this is the first part of the Quran to be revealed... A command to worship is just what we should expect to come first in view of the central tenor of the primary message of the Quran.[17]

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[16]. *The Koran*, 96:1-8.

[17]. Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca*, p. 47.

The early message of the Quran was based on three principal themes. The omnipotence and goodness of one God, the warnings of Judgement Day coupled with the damnation of the unbelievers, and the vehement attack on worldly riches and the need for charity.[18] Consequently, it was this third element that transformed Muhammad's message from a simple religious declaration to one willing to address the economic and social ills plaguing Meccan society at that time. In other words, it expanded Muhammad's movement into a truly political force.

It is not surprising that Muhammad's ideas were initially endorsed by those segments of society who had been the most detrimentally affected by Mecca's growth as a trade centre.[19] The rapid commercial growth of Mecca had quickly transformed Meccan society from a nomadic one - or peasant society - to one in which there now existed an ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor, between the influential and their dependants. As a result, many segments of the population were becoming more acutely aware of the growing economic disparity and began to focus on the need for some type of social justice.[20] According to Farah, by 610 in Meccan society

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[18] Fazlur Rahman, "The Message and the Messenger," in *The Religious and Political Life of a World Community*, ed. Marjorie Kelly (New York: Praeger, 1984), pp. 42-43.

[19] According to Rodinson, Muhammad's message most readily resonated with those individuals who could be termed the recent victims or 'losers' in the current transformation of Meccan society. See Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p.82.

> the wealthy lorded it [their wealth] over the poor; the helpless were at the mercy of the strong; greed and selfishness ruled the day; infanticide was widely practised by the Bedouins who lacked adequate means of sustenance, and there were numerous other evils prevailing in all levels of Arabian society that had the effect of widening the gulf between the privileged aristocracy and the deprived multitudes of Mecca.[21]

In studies examining the earliest converts to Islam, it is clear that this growing division of wealth was an important incentive to those who decided to follow the new religion. In his definitive study, Watt demonstrates that the first converts were generally the 'young and the less influential' who had seen its fortunes, and those of its clans decrease.[22] In reference to the original supporters of the Islamic message, Watt states that

> it would appear from a careful study of the social position of the first Muslims that they nearly all came from that section of the community which was most keenly aware of the social tensions or the most exposed to the rapacity of the merchant princes.[23]

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[20] Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 68.

[21] Farah, *Islam*, p. 39.

[22] Watt, *Muhammad*, pp. 36-39. Also see Armstrong who describes the earliest followers as the "young and marginal," Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 105, Christopher, as "...leaders of less wealthy clans, young men, for the most part, and junior members of more successful clans," Christopher, *The Islamic Tradition*, p. 21, and Glubb who writes of Islam as distinctly a "youth movement." Glubb, *The Life and Times of Muhammad*, p. 99.

[23] W. Montgomery Watt, *What is Islam?* (London and New York: Longman, 1968), p. 95.

Farah concurs with Watt's view, and in fact argues that it was primarily Islam's social message, not its religious pronouncements, that attracted its earliest supporters.

> If he [Muhammad] gained converts, it was due less to the threats of eternal fire than to the strong justice and egalitarian principles embedded in the message of submission to God. The promise of sharing with the "haves" had a particular appeal to the "have-nots" of Mecca.[24]

There was one further impact this rapidly changing society and the corresponding divisions between the "haves" and the "have-nots" had for Muhammad's movement. The fact was that the old moral standards, like the Arab code of honour and the belief in tribal solidarity where each individual was protected within the security of the tribe, were already in a process of disintegration. Watt argues that

> the change from a nomadic to a mercantile economy led entrepreneurs to "become conceited and individualistic." At the same time their sense of solidarity with their clan was seriously weakened; many of them were clan chiefs, but they began to neglect the traditional duty of clan chiefs to look after the poor and unfortunate.[25]

Consequently, the great merchants of Mecca became more interested in business dealings than in caring for their fellow clansman and shirked their chiefly duties in tending to the weaker and more unfortunate members of the clan. In this climate the old laws of tribal solidarity were broken on a daily basis, as the weak and orphans were sold into slavery.[26]

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[24]. Farah, *Islam*, p. 43.

[25]. Watt, *What is Islam?* p. 14.

It is clear from the aforementioned discussion that the rapid economic growth experienced by Mecca had led to a breakdown in tribal society, which in turn reinforced the ever-widening gap between rich and poor. In many ways, the circumstances in Mecca at the time are very similar to those currently experienced by many Middle Eastern societies. Consequently, while the problems may have been originally interpreted as economic in nature, it is clear that the cultural, social, and even 'religious' repercussions created by this rapidly changing environment were more crucial in determining whether a specific individual decided to join Muhammad's infant movement.

It appears that in the early years of its existence Muhammad's movement encountered little public opposition. In fact, it seems for the first three years after receiving his initial revelation Muhammad preached Islam strictly within the privacy of his own home.[27] Yet, even after the message of Muhammad spread outside the confines of the small personal circle he had gathered, at first, other members of the Qurayshi tribe were content to simply mock his message and ridicule what must have seemed to them as strange and foreign rituals.[28]

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[26]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 66.

[27]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 101.

While the early opposition towards Muhammad and his movement was mild, it appears that the incident of the 'Satanic Verses' - in approximately 615 - represented a important transformation in the relationship between Islam and the fundamental beliefs of his fellow Qurayshi tribe members. While it is of course impossible to go into the full details of this story, the most important impact of this incident for our purposes is that prior to this time Muhammad's sect appeared willing to accommodate their belief in one supreme God (*al-Lah* - the God) with the other gods of polytheistic Mecca. After this incident though, it became clear that Muhammad would not accommodate his belief in one omnipotent God with that of the Meccan majority. The pagan gods worshipped by most Meccans were no longer lesser Gods, but instead non-existent, and hence powerless deities.[29]

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[28]. See Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 121, and Guillaume, *Islam*, p. 31.

[29]. Certain elements of this affair have already been examined in some detail in Chapter 4. For a further explanation of the incident of the 'Satanic Verses' and its impact on the future relations between the Quraysh and the Muslims see Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca*, pp. 100-109.

To many members of the Quraysh, this new and radical declaration by Muhammad - One God - struck at the very core of the Meccan belief system of the time. Consequently, the leaders of the Qurayshi tribe were no longer content with simply mocking Muhammad's small sect. They realized that more drastic action was necessary to confront the threat Islam now posed to their privileged positions, and thus decided to embark upon a more actively violent stance.[30] For it was at this point that the leaders of Quraysh now realized the very real threat Muhammad and his new movement posed towards their positions of power and wealth.

There were three principal reasons the leaders and great merchants of Mecca objected to Muhammad's message. The first was economic. The chiefs of Mecca understood that if their Gods and idols were deemed powerless the Kabah would consequently lose its position as the principal pagan sanctuary in Central Arabia. Since the surrounding tribes conducted an immense amount of trade during the holy months, the loss of the Kabah's status would also deprive the Meccans of their chief revenue-making device.[31]

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[30]. Ali, *Muhammed The Prophet*, p. 65.

[31]. See Guillaume, *Islam*, p. 31 and Christopher, *The Islamic Tradition*, p. 22.

The second factor that led to increased opposition to Muhammad was political in nature. Many of the top leaders of Mecca believed that Muhammad's message could severely undermine their claims to political legitimacy and adversely affect their ability to rule Mecca. At that time Mecca was ruled by a senate or *mala*, which consisted of an assembly of the chiefs and leading men of the various clans.[32] According to Watt:

> They perhaps ... felt that Muhammad's claim to be in touch with a supernatural source of wisdom, combined with his other gifts, meant that he was bound sooner or later to be a serious candidate for supreme rule in Mecca, and therefore a threat to the controlling oligarchy.[33]

Muhammad was not only a threat to their local authority, but to their growing dominance over the entire region of Central Arabia. Consequently, they realized that by attacking the idols of the Kabah he "threatened their positions as the hereditary possessors of the venerated sanctuary of the gods."[34] It is clear from these first two perceived 'threats' that the Quraysh did not view Muhammad's movement from strictly a religious standpoint, but primarily as economic and political in nature.

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[32]. Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca*, p. 8.

[33]. Watt, *What is Islam?*, p. 97.

[34]. Guillaume, *Islam*, p. 31.

Finally, many leading members of Meccan society took exception to Muhammad's message itself. The great merchants of Mecca felt enormous pride in their ability to accumulate riches and they objected to his message that the rich were 'tight-fisted' and that they owed an obligation to the poor. As examined above, the condemnation of 'worldly riches' and the need for charity was one of the principal messages incorporated in the earliest revelations of the Koran.[35] In the opinion of many of the leading merchants of Mecca, the slanderous nature of Muhammad's message was sufficient enough reason to desire the end of his movement.[36]

With the perceived economic, political, and 'slanderous' (i.e., propagandist) threat of Muhammad growing, 615 signalled the year in which the leading members of the Qurayshi tribe decided to change their strategy from one of ridicule to one of confrontation. As proof of this increased tension Watt argues that the Muslim emigration to Abyssinia - as a Christian country its leader had demonstrated compassion for the plight of the monotheists - was the first example of the growing persecution of the Muslim sect.[37] During this period, certain Muslims who did not enjoy the protection of a specific tribe, such as slaves, were physically abused and some were even tortured to death. While Muhammad was fortunate enough to have the protection of the Hashim tribe and more specifically, his paternal uncle Abu Talib, he himself was mocked, heckled, and even physically assaulted.

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[35] While many examples can be found in the early passages of the Koran some of the most succinct are: "No! But you show no kindness to the orphan, nor do you vie with each other in feeding the destitute. Greedily you lay your hands on the inheritance of the weak, and you love riches with all your heart." *The Koran*, 84:18-20. "Your hearts are taken up with worldly gain from the cradle to the grave." *The Koran*, 102:1-2. "Woe to every back-biting slanderer who amasses riches and sedulously hoards them, thinking his wealth will render him immortal!" *The Koran*, 104:1-3. "Nothing shall his wealth and gains avail him." *The Koran*, 111:3.

[36] According to Glubb, many of Muhammad's opponents took exception to his condemnation of their ancestors on which much of the idol worshipping was based. In other words, when Muhammad condemned their idols, and hence their ancestors, "he condemned also their offspring, the living members of the tribe." Glubb, *The Life and Times of Muhammad*, p. 107.

It was at this point that the leaders of the Quraysh embarked on two specific strategies in their confrontation against what they perceived as the challenge for supremacy being waged by the upstart Muslims. The first was a boycott of the Hashim clan to which Muhammad belonged. This involved the signing of a pact in which the clans opposed to Muhammad would boycott both trade and intermarriage with members of the Banu Hashim in an attempt to prevent Muhammad from continuing the spread of his message.[38] The second component of their strategy against Muhammad and his followers was that of propaganda, or mental warfare. In this sense, the Quraysh used all means of debate, counter-argument, and the spreading of false rumours to ridicule Muhammad's position while promoting the positive aspects of their own point of view.[39]

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[37]. **Watt, *Muhammad*, pp. 66-67.**

[38]. **Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 114.**

By 619 Muhammad's position, and hence that of his followers, had become increasingly more tenuous. 619 is sometimes referred to as "Muhammad's year of sadness," for it was during this year that he lost both his faithful wife Khadija and his uncle and primary protector, Abu Talib.[40] After these losses, and believing that the very existence of his congregation was now at stake, Muhammad realized that he had no other option than to flee Mecca and search out a new home for his movement.

After an initially unsuccessful attempt to convert the tribes of Ta'if just south of Mecca - where it is said he was attacked and stoned by the local tribe - Muhammad had the fortune of meeting some members of the Khazraj tribe from Yathrib during the Meccan pilgrimage of 620. Yathrib, now Medina, is situated some 200 miles northeast of Mecca. For the Khazraj, the growing status and authority of Muhammad was not a source of intimidation, but instead provided them with hope, for they had been involved in a long and bloody battle with the other principal tribe of Yathrib, the Aws.[41] At the time, according to Watt:

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[39]. Ibid., p. 117.

[40]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 134.

> Medina was much divided; and the lack of unity, with the suicidal warfare to which it led, meant that the point which had been at the root of opposition in Mecca - Muhammad's position as prophet and its political implications - was the very thing which offered the Medinans some hope of peace.[42]

In other words, in the opinion of the Khazraj only a powerful figure such as Muhammad could end the constant warfare and bring peace to the Yathrib.[43]

By the pilgrimage of 622 it seems that both the Khazraj and the Aws tribe had decided to forsake a degree of autonomy in the hope that Muhammad would be able to arbitrate their differences and curb the deadly hostilities that now threatened the very survival of each tribe. Therefore, they decided to pledge their allegiance to Muhammad in what is referred to as "The Pledge of War." Basically, the pledge involved declaring their complete obedience to the apostle, "in weal and woe, in ease and hardship, and evil circumstances."[44] With a new home for his persecuted movement, the only remaining problem for Muhammad was how to escape Mecca undetected by his opponents.

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[41]. The two tribes had followed a near policy of extermination towards one another at 'the Battle of Bu'ath' (617). See Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 153.

[42]. Watt, *Muhammad At Mecca*, p. 143.

[43]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 144.

[44]. Ibid., p. 150.

According to the earliest Muslim sources, all that Muhammad now required before embarking on his migration (*Hijrah*) to Medina was the permission of God. Ibn Ishaq, the Prophet's first biographer, states that this permission was received after it was learnt that a plot was afoot to assassinate the Prophet.

> Thereupon Abu Jahl [Muhammad's primary opponent in Mecca] said that he had a plan which had not been suggested hitherto, namely that each clan should provide a young, powerful, well-born, aristocratic warrior; that each of these should be provided with a sharp sword; then each of them should strike a blow at him and kill him. Thus they would be relieved of him, and responsibility for his blood would lie upon all the clans.[45]

According to Ibn Ishaq: "It was then that God gave permission to his Prophet to migrate."[46] While the alleged assassination attempt on his life can never be fully authenticated, it is clear that in Muhammad's opinion the persecution of the Muslims had become so severe that only a drastic measure - such as the migration of his supporters to Medina - could guarantee their future safety.

At first, Muhammad had his followers - who at this time probably numbered no more than one hundred - depart Mecca in small groups to prevent raising suspicion on the part of the persecuting Quraysh.[47] Muhammad and Abu Bakr, his closest companion, were the last to leave Mecca.[48] Muhammad completed his *Hijrah* in September 622. The *Hijrah* remains the definitive date in Islamic history - the Muslim calendar commences at this point (0 A.H.) - because it represents the Muslims "cutting off of all ties of home and homeland for the sake of God."[49]

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[45]. Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat Rasul Allah*, p. 222.

[46]. Ibid., p. 223.

When examining the Medinan phase of Muhammad's movement (622-632) there are three components that need to be investigated to explain how Muhammad, within a decade, was able to build a counter-hegemonic force which initially totalled no more than one hundred members to one comprising almost the entire Arabian peninsula. The first dimension regards the extent of Muhammad's power during the first couple of years in Medina after the *Hijrah*. In other words, upon his arrival, was Muhammad an all-powerful leader asserting his influence over all elements of life within the desert oasis? More importantly, was he exerting political authority over the Medinans or was he simply an adjudicator and mediator of disputes between the two warring factions? Second, it is necessary to examine the steps Muhammad took to eliminate his internal opponents within Medina. This includes both the pagan opposition, led by Abu Ubayy, and the various Jewish factions in and around the oasis.[50] Finally, it is important to examine how Muhammad was able to carry his 'war of movement' beyond Medina and in the process eventually defeat the seemingly invincible Qurayshi elite of Mecca and destroy their pagan society. At the same time, he was able to substitute an entirely original culture, morality, and state system in its place. In other words, it is important to examine how Muhammad, within the span of a few short years, transformed Islam and its small group of followers into the new hegemonic force in central Arabia.[51]

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[47]. See Guillaume, *Islam*, p. 39, Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 161, and Glubb. According to Glubb, the Muslims probably numbered no more than a hundred people in a town with a population of about ten thousand inhabitants. This clearly demonstrates the danger inherent in remaining in such a hostile environment. Glubb, *The Life and Times of Muhammad*, p. 115.

[48]. See *The Koran, 9:40*.

[49]. Lings, *Muhammed*, pp. 119-120.

In reference to Muhammad's early status and authority within Medina, it seems that his initial role was little more than a judge or impartial arbiter of disputes and quarrels between the two warring tribes, the Aws and the Khazraj. The proof of Muhammad's modest power is derived from the Charter of Medina, thought to have been written within the first two years of Muhammad's entrance into the city.[52] Consequently, at this point, it does not seem that Muhammad possessed any specific political legitimacy or overarching authority.[53]

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[50]. There were three principal Jewish tribes which lived within the oasis with the Arabs. These were the Qaynuqa, Nadir, and Qurayza.

[51]. In terms of Muhammad's consolidation of power in Medina, the most detailed examination of the subject is by Donner. See Fred M. Donner, "Muhammad's Political Consolidation in Arabia up to the Conquest of Mecca," *The Muslim World* 69, no.4 (October 1979): 229-247.

However, according to Watt, even his role of adjudicator may have been more than the Medinans had originally planned when they made their initial offer to Muhammad.

> If the Medinans did not explicitly admit this right to judge disputes when they acknowledged Muhammad as prophet and arranged for him to come to their city, they must soon have been forced to do so, since a revelation came commanding the reference of disputes to God.[54]

Therefore, as Watt's comments readily demonstrate, not only did Muhammad enter Medina in a fairly vulnerable position with very little tangible authority, but that he embarked on his conquest of the hearts and minds of the Medinans incrementally and almost immediately upon his arrival in the city.

From the aforementioned examination, it is clear that while many Medinans hoped Muhammad could mediate their differences and bring a cessation to the almost continuous state of warfare that had developed, this does not espouse the view that Muhammad was given a 'carte blanche' by the warring tribes to do as he pleased. In fact, there were two principal groups that constantly opposed Muhammad and his movement, especially as the Muslims grew in stature and power throughout this period. The first opponent was drawn from selected members of the Aws and Khazraj tribes who refused to accept Muhammad's claims to prophethood and authority and were unwilling to forego their pagan beliefs. The unofficial leader of this group was Ibn Ubayy. In many of the later passages of the Koran this groups is referred to in scathing condemnation as the 'hypocrites.' The second group that opposed Muhammad throughout most of this period were the Jewish tribes within and around Medina. The opposition of the Jewish tribes stemmed not only from their denial to his claims of prophethood, which led to an increasingly hostile reaction from Muhammad, but also from his growing power base and his encroachment on what had been their traditional sphere of influence within the oasis.

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[52]. For the most thorough study of the Charter of Medina, see Watt, *Muhammad At Medina*, especially pp. 221-228.

[53]. See Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 155, and Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 154.

[54]. Watt, *Muhammad At Medina*, p. 230.

It is not surprising that many members of the Aws and Khazraj tribes opposed what they viewed as Muhammad's growing power within the desert city. To many he was still a foreigner from Mecca and his belief in one God (*al-Lah*) was not reconcilable with their own ancestral pagan beliefs. Ibn Ishaq provides perhaps the most accurate definition of this group when he defines the 'hypocrites' as persons

> clinging to the polytheism of their fathers [by] denying the resurrection; yet when Islam appeared and their people flocked to it they were compelled to pretend to accept it to save their lives. But in secret the hypocrites ... inclination was towards the Jews because they considered the apostle a liar and strove against Islam.[55]

As Ibn Ishaq demonstrates, the hypocrites and the Jewish tribes worked in close cooperation to undermine the appeal of the Prophet and his message. At every opportunity of weakness they sought to eliminate the growing influence of the Prophet, establishing a "sort of fifth column"[56] while working secretly with the Meccans in their attempts to end Muhammad's dreams of creating a Muslim state. Yet, even though Muhammad had knowledge of the covert actions of Ibn Ubayy - the self proclaimed leader of the hypocrites - there was very little he could initially do to prevent his clandestine plots.[57] The early activities of the hypocrites is further proof that Muhammad's power at this time was rather limited and that the struggle to win over the hearts and minds of the Medinans to the new spirit of Islam, and even the survival of the group itself, was far from assured.

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[55]. Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat Rasul Allah*, p. 239.

[56]. Rahman, "The Message and the Messenger," p. 37.

[57]. Ibid., p. 37.

The opposition of the 'hypocrites' to Muhammad in Medina was very similar to that endured at the hands of the Quraysh in Mecca during the early days of his preaching. In both situations, the opposition was primarily political in nature, not religious. As Martin Lings demonstrates in the case of Medina, Ibn Ubayy "felt himself robbed not of spiritual authority but of the chief temporal power in the Yathrib oasis."[58] This point once more demonstrates the explicitly political dimension of Muhammad's 'religious' movement.

As for the Jewish tribes around the oasis, they initially seemed prepared to accept the declarations of this self-proclaimed prophet. However, once more religious factors played a minimal role in their original acceptance. Instead, they were motivated by the belief that a prophet reiterating what appeared to be the message of the Old Testament could assist the Jews in reasserting their political influence in the oasis. In other words, the Jews could use Muhammad's claims to prophethood as an opportunity to regain their former supremacy in Yathrib.[59]

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[58]. Lings, *Muhammed*, p. 128.

[59]. Ibid., pp. 126-127.

However, once the Jewish tribes in and around Medina realized that Muhammad was more of a threat to their privileged positions than an asset, relations between the two groups began to deteriorate. Consequently, the Jews began to more vocally denounce the preachings of Muhammad and his claims to prophethood. In response, Muhammad sought to change certain of the Muslims rituals away form their Jewish roots, such as the period of fasting (Ashura to Ramadan) and the direction of the prayer (the *Qibla*).

At approximately the same time that Muhammad sought to distance his movement from its Jewish influences and accentuate its independent nature, in January 624, he made his fateful decision to initiate an open conflict with his former brethren in Mecca. Medina's location - lying 200 miles to the northeast of Mecca - had the strategic advantage of being positioned almost exactly halfway between Mecca and Syria. This would allow the Muslims to more easily launch raids or *'razzias'* on Meccan trade caravans, which remained the lifeline of Mecca's economic prosperity. While economic gain probably did play a role - the wealth to be accumulated through these *'razzias'* would be significant - writers such as Watt probably underestimate the part played by noneconomic factors.[60] Muhammad had already made it clear that Islam would not coexist with these worshippers of idols. In embarking on a new policy against the Meccans Muhammad seemed intent on transforming the conflict between these two parties into open warfare. As a result of this excursion, over the next four years the Muslims would fight three separate battles with the Meccans for hegemonic control over the Arabian Peninsula.

The first definitive battle fought between the two sides was in March 624 at Badr, a small fair outside Medina. Though the Muslims were outnumbered three to one - approximately 1000 Meccans to 313 Muslims - and the Meccans had more experienced fighters on their side then the inexperienced Muslims,[61] the Muslims scored a stunning victory over the numerically superior Meccan forces. According to Guillaume:

> Two factors were decisive in this victory: The spirit of religious fervour kindled in the hearts of the Muslims coupled with a strong faith in God's assistance, and the great skill of the Prophet in choosing the terrain on which to fight.[62]

In addition to these factors, the unified nature of the Muslim force, in contrast to the divided command structure of the Meccans, played an integral part in the Muslims' victory.[63]

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[60]. Watt, *Muhammad At Medina*, p. 231.

[61]. Ali, *Muhammed The Prophet*, pp. 113-114.

[62]. Guillaume, *Islam*, p. 43.

However, less important than the factors accounting for their victory, whether tactical, military, or religious in nature, were the immediate benefits it brought to Muhammad and his movement. In one sense, it helped to temporarily quell any domestic opposition that may have been building towards Muhammad.[64] But according to Rodinson:

> The gain in prestige was much more important. This was the new sect's first real success and it was a considerable one. The great city of Hejaz, which had been undefeated for generations, had suffered a major reverse.[65]

Furthermore, to those fighting by Muhammad's side and those unsure of his claims, this stunning victory was proof to many that Muhammad was in fact a true Prophet of God.

In terms of the domestic situation, it paralleled the external environment as Muhammad now changed his strategy from a war of words to one of physically confronting the Jews. This change occurred shortly after the Battle of Badr in March 624. The Muslims having gained strength from their victory at Badr now set about defeating, or more accurately, physically eliminating the Jewish tribes within Medina who they perceived as the mortal enemies of their cause. As any military leader understands the most effective method in which to embark on this type of strategy is through a policy of divide and conquer. Consequently, Muhammad decided to pursue such a strategy by methodically eliminating one tribe at a time, choosing the time and place most advantageous to his achieving victory.[66]

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[63]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 166. In Chapter 3, Gramsci emphasized that the extent of unity within a specific revolutionary organization - its degree of organic unity - is essential to a counter-hegemonic movement and can sometimes be a decisive factor in spite of its seemingly quantitative disadvantage. See Gramsci, *The Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, p. 217.

[64]. Watt, *Muhammad At Medina*, p. 181.

[65]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 168.

With the victory of Badr instilling a new confidence in his Muslim warriors the first Jewish tribe Muhammad sought to defeat was the Qaynuqa. Muhammad took a calculated risk in striking at the Qaynuqa because they did possess a formal alliance with Ibn Ubayy. While Ibn Ubayy had promised to assist the Qaynaqa if they were attacked, for two weeks they waited for Ibn Ubayy to fulfil his defensive alliance with them. Eventually his inaction forced them to surrender unconditionally.[67] This division in the ranks of their opponents, as compared to the unity demonstrated by the Muslims, would eventually prove to be a key factor in the downfall of Muhammad's adversaries. Consequently, the Jews of

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[66]. Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, p. 191.

[67]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 184.

Qaynuqa were thrown into exile. Muhammad, though the leader of what was still primarily considered a religious faction at that time, had clearly demonstrated that he was not above the tactics of similar groups fighting for political dominance. He realized that violence and terror were necessary evils in such a battle for supremacy.[68]

One year following their humiliating defeat at Badr, the Meccans were determined to do battle with the upstart Muslims, this time possessing an army over 3000 strong. It is clear that while the Meccans sought to enact revenge for their previous loss, in the opinion of the Quraysh "he [Muhammad] was the root cause of all the trouble and the sole object of the war was to get rid of him."[69] Consequently, against his better judgement,[70] Muhammad and his force of 700[71] met the enemy at the foot of Mount Uhud north of Medina.

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[68]. Muhammad proved his ability to use such political tools as assassination when it served his purpose. A few months after the attack on the Qaynuqa, Muhammad had the Jewish poet Ka'b assassinated when he would not desist in his writing of defamatory and seditious poetry against the Prophet. See Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 185.

[69]. Ali, *Muhammed The Prophet*, p. 124. Also see Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat Rasul Allah*, p. 370.

[70]. Muhammad thought it was more prudent to remain within the city than go out and fight such a superior force, but was convinced by many of his younger and more zealous fighters to actively confront the Meccans. See Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 256.

[71]. It was originally 1000, but Ibn Ubayy deserted with his 300 men and returned to Medina. See Ali, *Muhammed The Prophet*, p. 198.

Once more, Muhammad obtained the tactical advantage by positioning his archers on the mount where they could fire down arrows on the attacking Meccan forces. While the Muslims had some preliminary success, about forty archers, sensing victory and a scramble for the spoils, left their positions on the mount. When the Meccans eventually regrouped they returned to rout the Muslims. The result was that many of Muhammad's faithful were killed while Muhammad himself was hit in the face with a rock breaking two of his teeth. At this point, a rumour circulated that the Prophet had been killed. The Meccans then departed believing they had achieved their aims. Uhud clearly represented the low point in Muhammad's Medinan period. As Guillaume asserts, to many Medinans, Muslim and non-Muslim alike:

> If Badr was a proof that God was on their side what could be said of Uhud? Lamentation and woe were heard on all sides and many who mourned the loss of a father or brother blamed Muhammad as the author of their calamity.[72]

It seems that Muhammad was only able to avert a mutiny by some of his less faithful supporters by diverting their attention towards the Jewish tribe of Banu Nadir and the consequent expropriation of their lands (see below). In addition, a Koranic revelation was soon received by Muhammad explaining the more eminent reasons behind the Muslim defeat at Uhud. According to this passage:

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[72]. Guillaume, *Islam*, pp. 45-46.

> God fulfilled His pledge to you when by His leave, you defeated them. But afterwards your courage failed you; discord reigned among you and you disobeyed the Apostle after he had brought you within view of what you wished for. Some chose the gain of this world;[73] others chose the world to come. He allowed you to be defeated in order to test you. But now He has forgiven you, for God is gracious to the faithful.[74]

Therefore, Muhammad could justify the loss at Uhud on the grounds that the Muslims had allowed their greed for the material wealth of this world to blind them to their service of God and the true rewards of the afterlife.

Domestically, the Battle of Uhud clearly marked the ebb of Muhammad's internal position. All his opponents were quick to assert that if the victory at Badr had confirmed Muhammad as the Prophet of God, the defeat at Uhud must surely be interpreted as a sign of the vanity of his claims.[75] In this period of profound weakness and fearing a backlash from some of his less devout supporters, Muhammad ordered a siege of the Banu Nadir to divert the attention of the followers. While the Banu Nadir were first prepared to offer resistance, Ibn Ubayy - having previously promised aid to the Banu

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[73]. This refers to the archers who left the mount to pursue the perceived spoils of the battle.

[74]. *The Koran*, 5:152-153.

[75]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, pp. 182-183.

Qaynuqa - once more demonstrated his unwillingness to assist the Jews in their conflict with Muhammad.[76] Consequently, the hypocrites' failure to support their Jewish 'allies' continued to demonstrate the inherent divisions within the opposition. This time it led to the defeat of the Banu Nadir, as well as their exile and the confiscation of their lands.

The last remaining Jewish tribe in Medina, the Banu Qurayza, realizing that they would almost certainly be Muhammad's next target joined with the hypocrites and the invading Meccan forces during the Battle of the Ditch in March 627. It was their hope to defeat the Muslims and finally rid the oasis of Muhammad before he inevitably turned on them. The Meccans, having arrived at the outskirts of Medina with over 10,000 men, including their bedouin and Jewish allies, also sought to decisively eliminate the Muslim nuisance. As the Meccans marched on Medina, Muhammad realized that direct confrontation with this massive force would be suicide for the Muslims. Therefore, he decided to build a trench to protect the one approach to the city which was open to capture through an attack by the Meccans.[77]

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[76]. Haykal, *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 278.

[77]. Guillaume, *Islam*, p. 47. The three other sides to Medina were naturally protected by hills, and therefore impassable.

While the Meccans denounced the ditch as 'trickery' they began a thirty-day siege of the city in which they destroyed the Medinan harvest and rained arrows down upon the city night and day. Once more Muhammad's authority and claims of prophecy were being questioned by a majority of Medinans. During the siege, food supplies began to run dangerously low and many Medinans who had long questioned Muhammad's claims to prophethood began to entertain arguments put forth by the hypocrites regarding the need to dispose of the 'troublemaking' Muhammad.[78]

However, just at the moment when it seemed the Muslims' morale was ready to collapse the Meccans and their allies withdrew from their siege of the city. The exact reason for their departure is unknown, though for the faithful it is stated that a terrible wind was sent down by God which destroyed the Meccans camps, "allowing neither fire to burn nor tents to stand upright."[79] Some have argued that the disunity and conflicting interests present between the Meccans and their allies allowed the Muslims to sow distrust between the various tribes. According to Armstrong:

> It is not clear what happened exactly, but it seems that the Jews of Qurayza began to distrust the Meccans and insisted

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[78]. Lings, *Muhammed*, p. 224.

[79]. Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat Rasul Allah*, p. 460.

> [on] taking Qurayshi hostages to ensure fidelity: what would happen if the Meccans fled and left the Jews to the mercy of Muhammad?[80]

Another plausible explanation is that after such a long siege and so many troops to provide for, the Meccans and their allies simply exhausted their supplies. Regardless of the reasons, the withdrawal of the Meccan-led force proved a valuable victory to Muhammad, and once more seemed to verify in the minds of many that Muhammad's declarations of Prophethood must be valid. The battle of the Ditch would also represent the last major confrontation between the two opponents, a battle Muhammad won more based on the fact that he and his group had survived certain extermination at the hands of the Quraysh.[81]

After the Meccan-led force had disengaged from their siege of the city, Muhammad used the pretext that the Banu Qurayza had tried to 'stab the Muslims in the back' to commence with the destruction of the final Jewish tribe in Medina. After a short siege, many of the Qurayza probably believed that they would receive the same punishment enacted upon the Banu Nadir (i.e., exile), and therefore decided to surrender. However, this time Muhammad decided to destroy his enemy once and for all, and the decision was reached "that the men should be killed, the property divided, and the women and children taken as captives."[82] In the end, some 700-800 captives were put to death.[83] While Ibn Ubayy pleaded for the lives of his Jewish 'allies,' he was unsuccessful in his attempts to spare their lives. By eliminating his last Jewish opponent within the oasis, and by sending out a strong warning to others that opposed Muhammad, it is clear that by this juncture Ibn Ubayy and the hypocrites had lost all legitimacy, and hence all power and authority within the city. With his influence and power now absolute, Muhammad had become the undisputed and supreme leader of Medina by successfully utilizing a strategy of both word and deed, and position and movement, to eliminate his internal opponents. Yet, the survival of his movement would remain precarious until he had dealt with his long-term and deadlier foe, the Qurayshi tribe of Mecca.

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[80] Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 205.

[81] Donner writes an interesting counter to the argument proposed by most Muslim scholars that the Battle of the Ditch should be perceived as a moral or psychological victory for the Muslims. Donner believes that this battle demonstrated how weak the Muslims were in terms of the mighty Meccans and that the Treaty of Hudaybiya signalled the dramatic turning point in the fortunes of the Muslims. See the Treaty of Hudaybiya below. Donner, "Muhammad's Political Consolidation in Arabia up to the Conquest of Mecca," pp. 229-247.

With the last stronghold of internal resistance now eliminated, Muhammad decided to confront his adversaries to the south by announcing that he would make the pilgrimage to Mecca in 628. While the Ka'ba remained a pagan shrine, Muhammad would prostrate to his God, *al-Lah*, in the holy temple. When Muhammad and his followers began to travel south towards Mecca, effectively gaining new allies and supporters during the journey, the Meccans were more divided than ever on the appropriate strategy to conduct in confronting the Muslim menace. Once more, the unity and conviction of the Muslims strongly contrasted with the division and uncertainty exhibited by the Meccans, and proved to be a crucial factor in Islam's final success.

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[82]. Ibn Ishaq, *Sirat Rasul Allah*, p. 464.

[83]. Ibid., p. 464.

Since the Meccans lacked the will to fight they decided to negotiate a treaty of non-aggression with Muhammad. The main clause of the Treaty of Hudaybiya signed in 628 stated that the two parties would refrain from hostilities against each other and each others' allies for a period of ten years. The monumental repercussions of this piece of diplomacy were not lost on Ibn Ishaq who succinctly asserted that "no previous victory in Islam was greater than this."[84]

The Treaty of Hudaybiya had two direct consequences that lead Ibn Ishaq and others to conclude that this document was primarily responsible for the Muslims' eventual conquest of

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[84]. Ibid., p. 507.

Mecca less than two years later. First, by negotiating with Muhammad the Qurayshites had explicitly recognized Muhammad's influence in the region.[85] As Fazlur Rahman adds "the haughty Meccans had agreed to negotiate the pact on an equal footing with the Muslims."[86] The second and more important consequence was that the treaty led to a substantial increase in the number of Arabs who were now willing to join Muhammad's movement and convert to Islam. The willingness of the Muslims to confront the powerful Meccans impressed many of the nomadic tribes throughout the region.[87] Since the treaty had the direct consequence of releasing these tribes from their former obligations, they were now free to form an alliance with either Mecca or Medina.[88] In addition, this new relaxed atmosphere encouraged a free exchange of ideas,[89] which would eventually prove much more beneficial for the Muslims than the Meccans and their antiquated belief system. While Islam may have been attractive to many for its religious principles and spirit of conscience, it is also clear that most importantly to many of the Bedouin tribes of the region was the recognition of the growing power and status of the Muslims.

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[85]. Rodinson, *Muhammad*, p. 252.

[86]. Rahman, "The Message and the Messenger," p. 40.

[87]. Donner, "Muhammad's Political Consolidation in Arabia up to the Conquest of Mecca," p. 242.

[88]. Armstrong, *Muhammad*, p. 219.

[89]. Ibid., p. 226.

In the two years between the Treaty of Hudaybiya and the conquest of Mecca, the support for Islam - or at least the number of tribes that entered into alliances with the Muslims - continued to increase. In late 629, Muhammad set out from Medina with an army of 10,000 men determined to conquer the city of his birth. Abu Sufyan, the de facto Meccan leader, realizing that resistance was futile decided to negotiate with the invading forces. With little choice and even less will to fight, Abu Sufyan decided to abdicate power to the Muslims. While there was sporadic resistance, for the most part the Meccans surrendered peacefully and one by one began to convert to the new faith. To Muhammad this was the supreme victory. As H.A.R. Gibb points out:

> It was essential for Muhammad's purposes that Mecca should come in eventually of its own volition ... not as a beaten and resentful enemy, but as a willing, if not enthusiastic partner.[90]

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[90] Gibb, *Islam: An Historical Survey*, p. 20. Gilani makes a similar point that Muhammad did not want to force adherence to Islam, but instead sought to "capture the hearts" of the Meccans in their acceptance of the new faith. Through this demonstration of mercy towards the city that had expelled him and fought for his extermination, Muhammad's kindness, it was hoped, would demonstrate the true nature, and hence superiority, of the Muslim faith. See Gilani, *Methodology of Prophet Muhammad's Islamic Revolution*, pp. 208-212.

In the span of twenty years, Muhammad had gone from a single individual with a vision for an alternative worldview to the leader of the dominant hegemonic force in the region. Through his step-by-step creation of a revolutionary bloc, Muhammad and his followers were able to defeat each opponent that sought to obstruct the ultimate objectives of this dynamic Islamic movement. When Muhammad triumphantly returned to Mecca the victor in January 630 he had truly succeeded in his revolutionary aims and seized not only political power, but had genuinely created a new society, a new morality, and most fundamentally, a new type of man.